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LOWELL LECTURES.

VOLUME I.

LOWELL LECTURES

ON THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY,

BY

JOHN GORHAM PALFREY.

WITH A DISCOURSE

ON THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF JOHN LOWELL, JR.,

By EDWARD EVERETT.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.

M DCCC XLIII.

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PREFACE.

The provisions in the will of the late Mr. John Lowell, Jr., for the support of popular Lectures in the city of Boston, were first carried into effect in the winter of 1839–40; and the Lectures contained in these volumes, on the Evidences of Christianity, were read at the Odeon in that and the two following seasons.

In part, they travel over a beaten track. I might have fixed upon some single view of the subject, and endeavoured to enforce it with some novelty of illustration. But the duty of the first Lecturer, as it seemed to me, was rather to present such a general statement of the Evidences, as might afford a convenient basis for that detailed discussion of select topics, which, in its place, would be much more attractive to the hearer, while to the Lecturer

it would open inviting fields of original investigation. Proceeding on this ground, it has been sometimes unavoidable for me to present an argument in a form with which readers are already familiar. For instance, if the important topic of the rapid early diffusion of Christianity (treated in the eighth Lecture) was not to be omitted, it could only be illustrated by a statement of those facts, gathered from the Acts of the Apostles and from other sources, which have often been collected for the same purpose.

Though it was a condition of my engagement, that the manuscripts should be at the disposal of the Trustee of Mr. Lowell's foundation, I did not expect that these Lectures would be thought worthy to come before the public through the press, and they were prepared with a view to no other use than that which their name strictly imports. I hope that this fact may be received as some excuse for a diffuseness of style, which, however obnoxious to censure in a written treatise, is perhaps necessary to produce the desired effect in spoken addresses on subjects of this nature. Sensible as I have been of the fault, in compositions intended to be read, it was obviously beyond the reach of correction except by taking them into a new draft; and to do this would have been not to print my

Lectures, but to produce another work on the same subject. The frequent recapitulations of an argument, requisite to secure the attention of an audience, and the occasional repetitions of the same view in different connexions, might have been more easily suppressed. But in making such changes I should not have known where to stop; and on the whole I saw no sufficient objection to observing the method which the title indicates, and recording the spoken discourse upon the printed page.

In a very small number of instances, for want of access to some work containing an authority to which I have had occasion to refer, I have been compelled to quote it at second hand. Wherever this has been the case, it is distinctly so expressed in the terms of the reference. In the frequent references to one author, Eusebius, I have not, as in other cases, specified pages, as well as books and chapters, the editions of his History being numerous, and the chapters being so short as to render any other form of citation superfluous. In a few instances, having occasion to refer to a work after the copy which I had been using had passed out of my reach, I have been compelled to take quotations from a different edition. But in such instances, the change of edition is always noted.

Some readers, who may be inclined to approve my views, expressed in the eighteenth and twenty-second Lectures, respecting the testimony of the Christian evangelists and apostles to the sense of the Old Testament, will think that I ought to have made an express exception in behalf of the mystical interpretations in the Epistle (so called) to the Hebrews. To such I reply, that, in my opinion, that anonymous composition is not to be considered in the case. I agree with many Orthodox divines of the highest name, that there is no reason to ascribe it to any Christian apostle or evangelist, but abundant reason to the contrary; and that it has no claim to be received as part of the canonical New Testament. This is no place to enter into the discussion. But I suggest nothing new to any biblical student, when I declare my own conviction, that, on all grounds of external and of internal evidence, a reasonable inquirer must conclude that it was not written by St. Paul, from association with whose name it derives its current authority; and that the New Testament revelation is in no degree responsible for the correctness of that method of interpretation of Old Testament Scripture, which its writer, whoever he was, approved and used.

I trust that I may yet be able to lay fully before

the public my views concerning the important questions touched upon in those Lectures. The publication of my work "On the Jewish Scriptures and Antiquities" was arrested three years ago, after two volumes had been issued, by the death of the publisher who had undertaken it; and, since that time, the depressed state of the book trade in this country, added to the little interest which the work had excited, has prevented a renewal of the undertaking. Should the remaining two volumes ever see the light, I design to follow them by two volumes of comments on the New Testament, with a particular view to clear up its connexion with the Old, and to show that its references to that collection afford no ground for those cavils of infidelity, of which they have been the occasion.

J. G. P.

Boston, Massachusetts;
January 20th, 1843.

ERRATA.

Vol. I. page 151, line 1, for *had* read *read*
" 199, " 13, " *is* " *was*
" 284, " 18, " *expedient* " *expedients*
" 345, " 24, " *actual the* " *the actual*
" 358, " 2, " *an* " *any*

Vol. II. " 74, " 24, " *Philostrates* " *Philostratus*
" 81, " 1, " *book,* " *books*
" 212, " 30, " *p.* — " *p.* 167.
" 216, " 3, " *texts* " *Text*
" 238, " 28, " *Gen. xii.* 3 — *xviii.* 18 — *xxii.* 18 — *xxvi.* 4 read *Gen. xii.* 3; *xviii.* 18; *xxii.* 18; *xxvi.* 4.
" 289, " 29, " *p.* 181 read *p.* 179 (*Edit. Cleric.*)
" 343, " 12, " *mythology* " *philology*
" 345, " 10, " *recommended* " *recommend*
" 394, " 19, dele *an*

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DISCOURSE

ON

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

JOHN LOWELL, JR.

MEMOIR

OF

JOHN LOWELL, JUN.*

THE occasion of our meeting at this time is of a character not less unusual than interesting. By the munificence of the late Mr. John Lowell, jun., a testamentary provision was made for the establishment of regular courses of public lectures, upon the most important branches of natural and moral science, to be annually delivered in the city of Boston. The sum generously set apart by him for this purpose, and amounting nearly to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, is, with the exception of the bequest of the late Mr. Girard of Philadelphia, the largest, if I mistake not, which has ever been appropriated in this country, by a private individual, for the endowment of any literary institution. The idea of a foundation of this kind, on which, unconnected with any place of education, provision is made, in the midst of a large commercial population, for annual courses of instruction by public

* This Discourse was delivered by Governor Everett, at the Odeon in Boston, December 31st, 1839, as the Introduction to the Lectures on Mr. Lowell's Foundation.

lectures, to be delivered gratuitously to all who choose to attend them, as far as it is practicable within our largest halls, is, I believe, original with Mr. Lowell. I am not aware that, among all the munificent establishments of Europe, there is any thing of this description upon a large scale ; and I cannot but regard it as a conception eminently adapted to the character and wants of our community, and promising to be as beneficial as it is original and generous.

The form of instruction by public lectures has greatly prevailed of late years, and obtained a high degree of favor in this and other parts of the United States. It has been ascertained, that twenty-six courses of lectures were delivered in Boston during the last season, not including those which consisted of less than eight lectures ; — many of them by lecturers amply qualified to afford instruction and rational entertainment to an intelligent audience. These lectures, it is calculated, were attended, in the aggregate, by about thirteen thousand five hundred persons, at an expense of less than twelve thousand dollars. This is, probably, a greater number of lectures than was ever delivered in any previous year ; but the number of courses has been steadily increasing, from the time of their first commencement, on the present footing, about twenty years ago.* It is not easy to conceive of any plan, by which

* Courses of botanical lectures were delivered in Boston by Professors Peck and Bigelow in the year 1813, and of chemical lectures by Dr. Gorham, about the same time. The statement of the number of lectures in 1839, is derived from the last Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education, p. 74.

provision could be made for the innocent and profitable employment of a part of the leisure time of so large a portion of the community, at so small an expense.

These facts sufficiently show the vast importance, as well as the popularity, of this form of public instruction, and they naturally lead to the question, whether it does not admit of improvement in respect to the character of the lectures, and the basis on which they are delivered. In answer to this inquiry, it readily suggests itself, that, notwithstanding the great and unquestioned benefit which must accrue to the community, from the delivery of so large a number of lectures on scientific and literary subjects to voluntary audiences of both sexes, there are two points, in which the system is evidently defective. In the first place, the means of the institutions, under whose auspices most of the public lectures are delivered, are inadequate to hold out a liberal and certain reward to men of talent and learning, for the preparation of well-digested and systematic courses. The compensation is necessarily limited to a moderate fee, paid from the proceeds of the subscriptions to the courses. A necessary consequence is, that the greater part of the lectures are miscellaneous essays, delivered by different persons, without reference to each other. These essays are often highly creditable to their authors as literary efforts ; and in the aggregate, no doubt, they are the vehicle of a great amount of useful knowledge. But it cannot be denied, that the tendency of lectures, prepared under these circum-

stances, is to the discussion of popular generalities, for the production of immediate effect; and that a succession of such lectures during a season can never be expected to form a connected series upon any branch of useful knowledge. A few instances of continuous courses, delivered in exception to the foregoing remarks, will not, I presume, be considered as inconsistent with their substantial accuracy.

In another respect the system obviously admits improvement. Although the length of time for which these lectures have been delivered among us, with increasing public favor, is matter of just surprise, in the absence of all established funds for their support; yet there is just ground for apprehension, that the system may not prove permanent without further provision to sustain it. Whatever relies for its support on retaining the public favor, without a liberal compensation for the performance of labor, and without the means of withstanding the caprices of fashion and the changes of popular taste, is, of course, in some danger of declining, when the attraction of novelty is over, and the zeal of a first enterprise is exhausted. Even if there were no just ground to fear an entire discontinuance of the public lectures, it is obvious that the present system contains no principle for such a steady improvement in the character of the instruction they furnish, as is necessary to make them a very efficient instrument of raising the literary and scientific character of the community.

For each of these evils an ample remedy is found in the provisions of Mr. Lowell's bequest. It holds out the assurance of a liberal reward for the regular delivery of systematic courses of lectures. By the positive regulations of the founder, these courses will extend to some of the most important branches of moral, intellectual, and physical science; while the trustee is enabled, in the exercise of the liberal discretion reposed in him, to make provision for any lectures, which, in his judgment, may be most conducive to the public improvement. The compensation, which is provided by the bequest, is sufficient to reward the lecturers for the elaborate and conscientious preparation of their courses, and consequently to command the highest talent and attainment engaged in the communication of knowledge in this country; and this, not for the present season or the present generation, but, as far as it is possible for human wisdom and human laws to give permanence to any of the purposes of man, for all coming time.

We may therefore consider it as certain, that all who are disposed, in this community, (within the limitation, of course, of the capacity of our largest halls to accommodate an audience,) to employ a portion of their leisure time in the improvement of their minds in this way, will henceforward enjoy the fullest advantage of regular courses of public lectures, delivered without expense to those who hear them, by persons selected for their ability to impart instruction, and amply rewarded for

the labor of faithful preparation. While the public are reaping this advantage, the permanent funds provided by the founder's bequest will constitute a very important addition to the other existing inducements to the pursuit of a studious life; and may in that way be expected gradually to exert a sensible influence, in elevating the scientific and literary character of the country.

It may also be observed, that, so far from preventing the delivery of other courses of lectures on the plan hitherto pursued, this foundation may be expected to extend its beneficial influence to them. It is physically impossible, that much more than a tenth part of the whole number of those estimated to have attended the lectures of the last season, should be accommodated in any one hall; and a single repetition is all that can be expected of any lecture on the Lowell foundation. A very great demand for other courses will therefore continue to exist; and the Lowell Institute, by causing the preparation and delivery of a steady succession of lectures, capable of being repeated before other audiences, will facilitate the supply of this demand. It will no doubt become easier than it has heretofore been, for other institutions, with the command of limited means, to procure for their audiences the advantage of systematic courses.

Such is the general character, briefly sketched, of Mr. Lowell's foundation. The first course of lectures is now about to commence, on the subject of Geology,

to be delivered by a gentleman, (Professor Silliman of Yale College,) whose reputation is too well established in this department of science, both in Europe and America, and is too well known to the citizens of Boston, to need an attestation on my part. It would be arrogant in me to speak further of his qualifications, as a lecturer on this foundation. The great crowd assembled this evening, consisting as it does of a moiety only of those who have received tickets of admission to the course, sufficiently evinces the desire which is felt by the citizens of Boston again to enjoy the advantage of his instructions; while it affords a new proof, if further proof were wanting, that our liberal founder did not mistake the disposition of the community to avail themselves of the benefits of an institution of this character.

As an introduction to this first course of lectures before the Lowell Institute, I cannot but think it will be deemed reasonable and just, by this respectable audience, to devote a single hour to the commemoration of the munificent founder. As he thought proper to restrict his bequests to objects which he deemed of direct public utility, forbidding the expenditure of any part of the fund in buildings and fixtures, which, in other foundations, that may be compared to this, usually serve as sensible monuments to their founders, and limiting its application to purposes at once the least ostentatious and the best calculated to act immediately

on the mind of the community, — it seems doubly reasonable that we should devote at least one evening to a notice of his brief and somewhat eventful life. I have yielded cheerfully to the request of the highly respected trustee of Mr. Lowell's foundation,* — the kinsman and friend to whom he confided the sole administration of the largest and most important bequest ever made in this city, — that I would undertake the honorable task of paying this tribute of gratitude to the memory of our deceased fellow-citizen and benefactor. I can only regret that, amidst the engagements devolving upon me at this season of the year, I have wanted leisure to prepare myself in a manner more worthy of the subject, and the attention of this large and respected assembly.

Mr. John Lowell, jun., bore an honored name among us. Not to speak of the titles of the living to public respect and gratitude,† I may be pardoned for dwelling, for a few moments, on the characters of the departed. He was the grandson of the late Judge Lowell, whose father, the Rev. John Lowell, was the first minister of Newburyport. The memory of Judge Lowell, I am confident, is respectfully cherished by many persons whom I have now the honor to address. He was among those who enjoyed the public trust and confidence in the times which tried men's souls, and bore his part in the greatest work recorded in the annals of constitutional liberty, — the American revolution. He

* John Amory Lowell, Esq. † See Note at the end.

was graduated at Harvard College in 1760. He studied the law under Oxenbridge Thacher, and was admitted to practise in 1762. This was the year following that, in which his professional master was associated with James Otis, in arguing the great cause on Writs of Assistance. Educated in this school, it is unnecessary to state what were his principles on the subject of the momentous controversy which had so long been ripening toward a crisis. He was elected, in 1776, the representative of the town of Newburyport, in the provincial assembly of Massachusetts, being then thirty-three years of age. In the following year, he removed to Boston; and it is a striking proof of the confidence reposed in his principles and in his ability to maintain them, that he was immediately elected as one of the representatives of this town to the General Court. In 1779, he was chosen a member of the convention for framing a constitution of State government. He was, with James Bowdoin and John Adams, from the Boston delegation, placed upon the committee of twenty-four, for reporting a declaration of rights and the form of a constitution. In the year 1781, he was chosen a member of the Continental Congress, and in the following year was appointed by that body one of the three judges of the court, which had been established for the trial of appeals from the courts of admiralty in the several states. In 1784, he was selected as one of the commissioners to establish the boundary between Massachusetts and New York.

On the adoption of the constitution of the United States, Judge Lowell was appointed by General Washington to the bench of the District Court of Massachusetts. He filled the judicial station with eminent ability; and was, in particular, well versed in admiralty law, at a time when that branch of jurisprudence was less familiar at our tribunals, than at the present day. In 1801, he was appointed chief justice of the Circuit Court for the first circuit, under the new organization of the judiciary, which then took place. — He was for eighteen years a member of the Corporation of Harvard College, warmly attached to its interests, and one of the most zealous and efficient of its friends, at a time when its prosperity was less securely established than at present. He was distinguished for his literary taste and his attainments as a scholar. On the decease of Governor Bowdoin, President of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, Judge Lowell was requested by the Academy to deliver his eulogy, which was afterwards published in one of the volumes of the Academy's Memoirs. His active benevolence made him an object of affection and gratitude. The integrity of his official character was universally admitted amidst the collisions of party. His personal intercourse was rendered peculiarly attractive by his brilliant powers of conversation, and was the delight of all who enjoyed it.

The maternal grandfather of our founder was the late Jonathan Jackson, Esquire, who was also one of the most esteemed and distinguished citizens of Boston.

Judge Lowell, though of the preceding class, had been his chamber-mate and most intimate friend at college. This circumstance, probably, induced Mr. Jackson, after leaving college, to transfer his residence to Newburyport. After passing an apprenticeship in the counting-house of Patrick Tracy, Esquire, then one of the most distinguished merchants of Newburyport, he commenced business in that town. Like his early friend, of whom I have just spoken, Mr. Jackson took a prompt and decided part with the friends of American independence. After the removal of Judge Lowell to Boston, Mr. Jackson represented the town of Newburyport in the provincial legislature. He was a member of the convention, which assembled to frame the State constitution, and was one of the committee of twenty-four, above alluded to, by whom the plan of that instrument was reported. In 1782, he was a member of the Congress of the United States.

Mr. Jackson inherited from his father what, in those days, was considered a large patrimony. Besides bearing his allotted portion of the public burdens, he made voluntary advances and contributions for the public service, and at the close of the war was largely the creditor of the Commonwealth.

At the time of the insurrection in 1786, Mr. Jackson was among the most forward to maintain the supremacy of the laws. In the company of volunteers who marched from Boston to support the sheriff of Middlesex, he was the second in command. Subsequently he

went to the western counties as a volunteer aid to his friend General Lincoln, and remained with that distinguished soldier and patriot till the insurrection was suppressed.

On the organization of the federal government, he was appointed the first marshal of Massachusetts. On the introduction of the system of internal revenue, he was selected by President Washington to be inspector of the revenue in the county of Essex, and, in 1796, was appointed supervisor of the revenue of the whole state. He held this last office till the commerce of the country became sufficiently extensive to support the expenses of the government by the duties on imports, and the internal revenue ceased to be levied. In the latter part of his life, he was the treasurer of the Commonwealth, and of the University at Cambridge. This last office he held at the time of his death, in the year 1810. On his appointment as supervisor of the revenue of Massachusetts, in 1796, Mr. Jackson removed to Boston, where he continued to reside for the residue of his life. He was one of the most distinguished members of a circle of patriots, of whom but one or two survive ; —a class of men, who, now that time has softened the asperities of party-feeling, and impaired the interest of former controversies, will be admitted, on all hands, to have been among the most ardent friends of American independence, and the most intelligent and efficient founders of our constitutions of government. He was the friend and associate of Ames, of Parsons, and of

Cabot, and yielded neither to them, nor to any one, in sterling patriotism and Roman integrity, both in private and public life. The various public trusts and offices which he filled, sufficiently attest the estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries ; and he transmitted, at his decease, a name, honored in his own person, to those who have increased its honors in the highest walks of professional and active usefulness.

I take great satisfaction in these recollections ; they suggest a very pleasing combination of ideas. Our lamented founder, Mr. John Lowell, jun., was of the third generation which has come upon the stage since the close of the war of 1756, — the true date of the American Revolution. At that time, the United States were poor and feeble colonies. The generation to which he belonged was the first which came forward into life with much transmitted property ; and it will ever be remembered to his praise, that he has set such a bright example of pouring back so much of the ample portion which had fallen to his share, into the bosom of the public weal. Such being his personal merit, it is truly gratifying to trace his descent to those in the *first* generation, who were among the most prominent and effective citizens, in this part of the country, in establishing and consolidating the liberties of the country — the broad basis on which its prosperity has been reared, — and to a parent in the *second* generation, who was surpassed by no other in the success of his efforts to build on that foundation, and to diffuse among his

fellow-citizens the blessings of productive industry, as the natural result of free and wise institutions of government; and thus to lay the foundation of those accumulations of property, which, liberally dispensed, must, in a republic, constitute the great fund for all enterprises of social improvement.

That parent was Mr. Francis Cabot Lowell, who is still freshly remembered among us, as one of those who have reflected the highest honor on the character of the American merchant. He was distinguished for the originality of his views, the clearness of his perceptions, the variety and accuracy of his knowledge, and his power of bringing it to practical results, and perhaps still more for the sterling purity and integrity of his character. To him, more than to any other individual, is New England, or rather is America, indebted, for the permanent establishment of the cotton manufacture in this country. The earlier attempts had not gone beyond spinning by machinery, and had been made with but partial success. Mr. Slater had brought from England, in the year 1789, a knowledge of the inventions of Arkwright for spinning cotton; but the machinery constructed in this country is believed to have been originally of an imperfect character, and to have remained without improvement. Some attempts had been made, even before the arrival of Mr. Slater, to introduce this branch of industry. Bounties were granted by the State of Massachusetts, and considerable capital, here and elsewhere, was invested in the busi-

ness ; but no extensive or important results were obtained. The machinery was of an imperfect description, and badly constructed ; there was great want of skill ; commerce was the favorite pursuit with men of capital ; and the competition of foreign countries was, under these circumstances, overwhelming. Perhaps an obstacle as serious as any other, was a prevailing belief, amounting almost to a superstition, that it was impossible for this country to engage to advantage in any branch of manufactures, which had been long established in foreign countries.

At length, in 1807, the accustomed commercial intercourse of the United States with Europe was interrupted by political events, which seemed likely to continue to operate for some time. Sagacious observers began to perceive the approach of a new era in American industry ; and capital, to some extent, in the different parts of the country, being necessarily withdrawn from commerce, sought investment in various branches of manufactures. This, however, was more particularly the case in Pennsylvania, and in reference to the manufactures of iron. The demand for cotton goods was, no doubt, to some extent, supplied, during the interruption of our intercourse with Europe and India, by American manufactures of that article, but mainly, it is believed, by household fabrics.

In 1810, Mr. Francis Cabot Lowell was induced to visit England with his family, on account of the state of his health. The vast importance of manufacturing in-

dustry, as a source of national wealth, was no doubt impressed with new force upon his mind in consequence of his observations in that country, and some branches of manufactures were examined by him with care; but it is not known that he paid particular attention to that of cotton. On his return home, and shortly after the commencement of the war of 1812, Mr. Lowell was so strongly convinced of the practicability of establishing that manufacture in the United States, that he proposed to a kinsman and friend (Mr. Patrick Tracy Jackson) to make the experiment on an ample scale. The original project contemplated only the weaving of cotton by machinery. The power-loom, although it had been for some time invented in England, was far less used in that country, in proportion to the quantity of cotton spun, than at the present day, and was wholly unknown in the United States. After deliberation, the enterprise was resolved upon. A model of a common loom was procured by Mr. Lowell and his friend, — both equally ignorant of the practical details of the mode in which the power-loom was constructed, — and their joint attention was bestowed on the re-invention of that machine. Satisfied with the result of their experiments, they proceeded to form a company among their personal and family friends, with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars, and entered into contract with Mr. Jacob Perkins to superintend the construction of the machinery. Mr. Perkins having left this part of the country before the machinery was constructed or

planned, the late Mr. Paul Moody was recommended by him as his successor in the enterprise; and no circumstance more favorable to its result could have occurred. Mr. Moody possessed a mechanical genius of the highest order, though at this time little developed by study or practice. On his first examination of the working model of the power-loom which had been constructed by Mr. Lowell and Mr. Jackson, he entertained but little hope of its success. He lived to see it become one of the most important agents in promoting the prosperity of America. The winter of 1812–1813 was passed at Waltham, where a water-power had been purchased, in bringing the loom to perfection. On being completed, it was found to answer the purpose so entirely, as to warrant the immediate construction, on the same plan, of all the looms needed for the establishment.

Here, however, an unforeseen difficulty presented itself, in the trouble and expense of preparing for the loom the thread obtained from the spinning-mills of the country, and which, in the original plan of the enterprise at Waltham, was depended on to supply the looms at that place. It was immediately determined to extend the undertaking to the entire manufacture of the article in all its parts. Machinery for spinning, of the best description known at that time in the country, was ordered; but on its erection at Waltham, it was pronounced by Mr. Moody to be worthless, and was immediately removed, at the total sacrifice of what it had

cost. It of course became necessary to supply its place; and, in the progress of this undertaking, the various portions of the machinery known to be in use in England were reconstructed at Waltham, without assistance from models, by a machinist who had never seen them in operation, with no aid but what was to be obtained from books, and some drawings of a portion of the works, which had been casually brought from England at this juncture. It is probable that the extent to which Mr. Moody and his intelligent employers were obliged to depend upon the resources of their own minds, was, upon the whole, an advantageous circumstance. Had they operated with working models of the best British machinery before them, they might have been satisfied with an exact imitation of them. As it was, important improvements were introduced in every part of the machinery, and some original inventions of great value were made. Among the former may be mentioned the improvements of the dressing-table and the warping machine; and, among the original inventions, the method of spinning the thread directly upon the quill, and the double-speeder. Many of these improvements and inventions have been since introduced into England. The mechanical contrivance and execution of the machinery was principally the work of Mr. Moody; the mathematical calculations necessary for their adjustment were all made by Mr. Lowell. The calculations connected with the double-speeder were submitted to the late Dr. Bowditch, with a view

to procure his testimony on a trial which had arisen as to the patent right, and were pronounced by him, on that occasion, to be such as few individuals were competent to perform.

Not less than two years and a half were required for these preparations, in which the whole capital of the company was expended. Such, however, was the faith reposed by their associates in the judgment of Mr. Lowell and Mr. Jackson, that when, in the autumn of 1815, it was proposed by these gentlemen to double the capital of the establishment, the proposal was promptly acceded to, although not a single piece of cloth had as yet been delivered from the looms. Some judgment may be formed from the following fact, which occurred at this period, or shortly after, of the reduction which has been effected in the price of an article, that enters so extensively into the ordinary consumption of the people of the United States. A considerable quantity of thread having accumulated in the hands of the company beyond the capacity of their looms, it was distributed among the hand-weavers in the neighbourhood, to be manufactured into cloth, at a cost of ten cents per yard for weaving. The entire cost of the same article, including, of course, the raw material, has been reduced below that sum!

Several months before this enlargement of the capital of the company, and while the machinery was yet in progress of construction, the war was terminated. This circumstance materially changed the

aspect of things in reference to many of the manufacturing projects in the United States. Much of the capital which had been invested in different parts of the Union in manufacturing establishments, was withdrawn at a great sacrifice. Mr. Lowell and his associates determined to persevere. The existing interruption of commerce had not been lost sight of as a circumstance favorable to their undertaking in its infancy, but its continuance as a permanent state of things had not been depended upon. Although, as we have seen, they had not yet finished a piece of cloth, they relied so confidently on their calculations, that they determined to risk the experiment of going on with the establishment; and probably no single purpose of private individuals ever involved a greater amount of public interests. They did not, however, conceal from themselves the fact, that a great change had taken place in the condition of the country. That interruption of trade, which was the original prompting cause of the enterprise, had now ceased to exist. It was in the nature of things that there should be a reaction; that the country, after so long an interruption of foreign commerce, would immediately be inundated from the glutted markets of Europe and India, pouring their stocks into the United States with a profusion inseparable from the return of peace. The double duties, which were levied for a year after the war, served as a temporary protection; and it was determined to make an appeal to the wisdom and patriotism of Congress, to devise a system of per-

manent security. The baleful connexion of this question with party politics had not then commenced. Mr. Francis Cabot Lowell repaired to Washington in the winter of 1816; and, in confidential intercourse with some of the leading members, he fixed their attention on the importance, the prospects, and the dangers of the cotton manufacture, and the policy of shielding it from foreign competition by legislative protection. Constitutional objections, at that time, were unheard of. The Middle States, under the lead of Pennsylvania, were strong in the manufacturing interest. The West was about equally divided. The New England States, attached, from the settlement of the country, to commercial and navigating pursuits, were less disposed to embark in a new policy, which was thought adverse to some branches of foreign trade, and particularly to the trade with India, from which the supply of coarse cottons was principally derived. The Planting States, and eminently South Carolina, then represented by several gentlemen of distinguished ability, held the balance between the rival interests. To the planting interest it was demonstrated by Mr. Lowell, that, by the establishment of the cotton manufacture in the United States, the southern planter would greatly increase his market. He would furnish the raw material for all those American fabrics which should take the place of manufactures imported from India, or partly made in England from India cotton. He would thus, out of his own produce, be enabled to pay for all the supplies which he required

from the North. This simple and conclusive view of the subject prevailed, and determined a portion of the South to throw its weight into the scale in favor of a protective tariff. The minimum duty on cotton fabrics, the corner-stone of the system, was proposed by Mr. Lowell, and is believed to have been an original conception on his part. It was recommended by Mr. Lowndes, it was advocated by Mr. Calhoun, and was incorporated into the law of 1816. To this provision of law, the fruit of the intelligence and influence of Mr. Lowell, New England owes that branch of industry which has made her amends for the diminution of her foreign trade; which has kept her prosperous under the exhausting drain of her population to the West; which has brought a market for his agricultural produce to the farmer's door; and which, while it has conferred these blessings on this part of the country, has been productive of good, and nothing but good, to every other portion of it. For these public benefits, — than which none, not directly connected with the establishment of our liberties, are of a higher order, or of a more comprehensive scope, — the people of the United States are indebted to Mr. Francis Cabot Lowell; and in conferring his name upon the noble city of the arts in our neighbourhood, a monument not less appropriate than honorable has been reared to his memory. What memorial of a great public benefactor so becoming as the bestowal of his name on a prosperous community, which has started, as it were, from the soil at the touch of his wand?

Pyramids and mausoleums may crumble to the earth, and brass and marble mingle with the dust they cover, but the pure and well-deserved renown, which is thus incorporated with the busy life of an intelligent people, will be remembered, till the long lapse of ages and the vicissitudes of fortune shall reduce all of America to oblivion and decay.

In thus dwelling, for a short time, on the eminent public services of his father, I am sure I shall stand in no need of an excuse with the friends of Mr. John Lowell, jun., the oldest of the four children (three sons and a daughter) who survived him, and inherited from him an honorable independence, — the well-merited reward of the efforts so widely felt in the prosperity of the country. Mr. John Lowell, jun., was born on the 11th of May, 1799, and, after receiving his earliest education in the schools of his native city, was taken by his father to Europe, on occasion of the voyage to which I have already alluded, and placed at the high-school of Edinburgh. He retained to the last an affectionate recollection of the friendships formed by him at this early period; and, during his travels in the East, toward the close of his life, he gave the most substantial and munificent proofs of the strength of the attachments of his childhood. He accompanied his father on his return to America, and in 1813 was placed at Harvard College. He had always been remarked for an inquisitive turn of mind, and for the eagerness with

which he sought to inform himself, both by conversation and books. He might be said, with truth, to have inherited a thirst for knowledge. His favorite reading was voyages and travels; and, at this early period of his life, he was more thoroughly acquainted with geography than most men of finished education. His health did not permit him to complete his collegiate course, and, after two years' residence at Cambridge, he left the University to follow a more active course of life. In 1816 and 1817, he made two voyages to India, — the first to Batavia, returning by Holland and England, the second to Calcutta.

His readiness to engage, in his youth, in these distant voyages, without the inducement of necessity, may, no doubt, be considered as an early indication of that passion for foreign travel, which afterwards disclosed itself in his character, and which was unquestionably stimulated by this glimpse of the remote East. Although circumstances did not permit him for a long time to gratify his taste in this respect, there is reason to believe, that he cherished, from a very early period, the hope of adding something to the stock of modern discovery. Among his earliest arrangements of business, there are traces of a plan of a voyage to Africa, and of attempts to explore the mysteries of the geography of that continent, which have hitherto resisted the enterprise, the courage, and the self-devotion of so many intelligent and unfortunate travellers.

From the time of his return from his second voyage,

with invigorated health, Mr. Lowell became a diligent student. He was engaged with success in commercial pursuits, and, of course, gave to them a sufficient degree of attention. His operations, however, were principally connected with the East Indies, and did not engross his time. His leisure was almost exclusively devoted to reading. He spared no time for the frivolous pleasures of youth, — less, perhaps, than his health required, for its innocent relaxations, and for exercise. Few subjects in science or literature escaped his attention; and an uncommonly retentive memory rendered available for future use, the knowledge which he was so diligent in acquiring. He rapidly formed one of the best selected and expensive private libraries in the city, and acquired a familiarity with its contents, not always possessed by the owner of many books.

He did not, however, allow his love of reading to divert his thoughts from the political and moral interests of the community. His time and his property were freely given to the calls of public and private benevolence. He engaged with earnestness in the promotion of the various public-spirited undertakings of the day. He took an active part in political concerns. Regarding our institutions of government as better adapted than any others to promote the virtue and happiness of the people, he considered it the duty of every good citizen to bear his part of the burden of sustaining and administering them. Engaged in lucrative pursuits, which made much attention to public business a pecuniary

sacrifice, and with a thirst for knowledge which superseded the necessity of political excitement, he yet gave himself, on principle, to the public service. He was repeatedly a member of the Common Council of the city, and of the legislature of the Commonwealth. In both of these bodies he was distinguished for his assiduous attention to his duties, and for the practical and business-like view which he took of every subject of discussion. Indeed, it was his characteristic to do *thoroughly* whatever he undertook. His usefulness was, however, more conspicuous in the committee-room than at the caucus; and, as he did not depend upon office for bread, he dwelt less than is the fashion of the day in professions of disinterested regard for the people. Leaving others to flatter them, his own conscience was satisfied, when he had served them to the best of his ability. He was a philosophical student of the genius of our political systems, and passed the autumn of the year 1829 at Richmond, for the purpose of attending the debates of the Convention assembled in that city to revise the constitution of Virginia.

In the years 1830 and 1831, he had the misfortune to lose, in the course of a few months, his wife and two daughters, his only children. This calamity broke up, for a season, all his pleasant associations with home, and served to revive the slumbering passion for foreign travel, of which we have seen the early indications. Desirous of extending his acquaintance with his own country before going abroad, he passed a considerable

portion of the summer of 1832 in a tour in the Western States. He made other preparations, of a more serious character, for what might befall him abroad, and, as the event proved, with a spirit foreboding that early termination of his life which Providence had appointed. Bereaved, by the domestic calamity just alluded to, of all those dependent upon him for their support and establishment in life, he had already conceived and matured the plan of his munificent foundation. By a will made before leaving his native country, he set aside a large portion of his ample property to be expended, for ever, in the support of those courses of lectures in the city of Boston, of which the first is now about to commence.

Although the plan of his travels abroad was not, probably, at this time settled, there is evidence that he contemplated a long absence and a very extensive tour. He, no doubt, proposed to himself, on leaving home, to penetrate the Eastern continent as far as practicable. He mentions, in some of his early letters, his purpose, if possible, to enter the Chinese empire by the Indian frontier. Alluding to the distant prospect of his return home, he uses the striking expression, "I must first see the circle of the earth." More than once he intimates the design of passing from the east of Asia to the Polynesian Archipelago.

With these vast projects revolving in his mind, — with feelings not alienated from home, but seeking relief from its sorrows in the excitement of travel, — with an almost unlimited command of the means of

gratifying his curiosity, — with a mind well fitted for instructive observation by the possession of a large amount of various knowledge, — with those moral qualities of industry, perseverance, and courage, which are required for advantageous travel in barbarous countries, — with that elevation of spirit, which is produced by a consciousness that he had made provision for great objects of public utility, to take effect should any disaster befall himself, — he sailed for Europe, in November, 1832, never to return. The following winter and spring were passed in Paris, and the summer and autumn of 1833 in England, Scotland, and Ireland. His project of extensive travels in Asia was now sufficiently matured, to be announced to his friends at home. He began to look on every thing abroad as it bore upon his preparation for this object. Information with respect to the routes was sought in every quarter, and instruments of the most perfect kind were procured by him to be made by the best artists in London. He omitted no opportunity of forming the acquaintance of the few individuals, who had preceded him in the regions which he proposed to explore. What was of the most material consequence, he received from Lord Glenelg, then Mr. Grant, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, such official recommendations as would have procured him greater facilities in his tour in the interior of India, than were ever enjoyed by a native of this country, — probably by any person not a native of Great Britain. The purpose of visiting the East had by this time seized upon his soul with the grasp of a

ruling passion. In one of his letters from London, in November, 1833, in describing, with great vivacity, the various personages to whom he had been presented at the hospitable table of Lord Glenelg, including among them those of the highest political rank and consideration in the kingdom, he speaks of a young gentleman, at that time unknown to fame, as being to him the most interesting person in the company, "the topmost jewel in a precious diadem." This individual was Lieutenant, now, I believe, Sir Alexander Burnes, well known as the author of Travels into Bokhara, and whose acquaintance with the interior of the Oriental world, acquired by thirteen years passed in the civil and military service of the Company, formed an attraction to Mr. Lowell, as he says, so engrossing, "as to lead him to forget almost every thing else, and to feel, in a short time, like an intimate acquaintance."

Early in December, 1833, he again passed over to the Continent, taking the route of Holland and Belgium to Paris. His projects for the future course of his travels, as far as they were digested at that time, may be gathered from a letter to the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States at London, of the 19th December, 1833, in reply to a letter of inquiry from that gentleman. "I leave Paris," says he, "in five or six days, and proceed rapidly through France, Italy, and Sicily, resting a few days at some of the principal towns. I expect to reach Malta by the beginning or middle of April. From Malta we shall endeavour to make a short visit to the

Pyramids, by the way of Alexandria and Cairo, and from thence to go to Jerusalem, by the way of the desert of Suez. Taking shipping at some port in Syria or Palestine, we shall follow the coast to Smyrna. Should this route be inexpedient, on account of want of time, fear of the plague, or political disturbance, we shall visit Greece before proceeding to Smyrna. From the last-named place we shall proceed to Constantinople, where we intend to arrive as early as the middle of July or first of August; because it would be very disagreeable to be overtaken by cold weather in the mountainous regions of Armenia, Koordistan, or Georgia. In August, we shall proceed from Constantinople to Trebizond on the Black Sea, probably by water. From Trebizond we shall start on horseback, and, placing our baggage on mules, follow for a time nearly the route of the ten thousand Greeks under Xenophon, and rest a short time at Teflis, the capital of Georgia. We shall leave Teflis as soon as possible, and stop next at Teheran, the capital of Persia. Here I propose to pass two or three months, both because, in all probability, the season will be unfavorable for travelling, and because I should like to obtain a slight knowledge of the Persian language. From Teheran we shall cross Persia, passing through Ispahan, the ruins of Persepolis and Shirauz, — the city of gardens, — and Busheer on the Persian Gulf. Thence I take shipping for Bombay."

Such, it will be observed, was but the introductory portion of the tour which Mr. Lowell projected, of which

the most important and considerable part was to commence with his arrival on the western coast of the peninsula of Hindostan. Events, to which I shall have occasion presently to allude, caused a departure from a considerable portion of the route here sketched out.

After a few days passed in Paris, and an excursion to the south-western portion of France, he proceeded to Italy, by the way of Nice and Genoa, and, having visited the principal cities in Lombardy, arrived in Florence in the early part of February, 1834. The charms of the climate, the beautiful remains of antiquity, and the wonders of modern art which have been produced by their contemplation, the all-pervading interest of the classic soil of Italy, with the attractions of society, to which he found access on the most advantageous footing, detained him in the various cities of Italy beyond his calculation. While in Florence, he gratified his taste for the fine arts, by engaging our accomplished fellow-citizen Greenough to execute a statue for him, on one of the most graceful subjects of classic mythology, to be presented to the Boston Athenæum. At Rome, he made an agreement with a Swiss artist, highly recommended to him by Horace Vernet, as an excellent draftsman and painter, to accompany him, for the purpose of taking sketches and designs of scenery, ruins, and costumes, throughout the whole of this tour. A considerable number of drawings, executed by this artist, have been received in this country since Mr. Lowell's decease.

Having completed the examination of the objects of interest in the vicinity of Naples, and visited the beautiful ruins at Pæstum, Mr. Lowell crossed to Palermo. Although within the pale of Europe, some of the peculiar hardships of Oriental travelling commence in the island of Sicily. Except in the immediate neighbourhood of large towns, there are no roads nor public conveyances, and no houses for the reception of travellers. But circumstances like these do but give a zest to travel. Mr. Lowell devoted a month to the tour of the island. He explored the majestic ruins of Agrigentum and Selinus, — perhaps the most imposing monuments of classical antiquity, — visited Syracuse and Catania, and ascended the middle region of Ætna. Nor was his attention confined to the wonderful remains of ancient art; he surveyed the countries he visited with the eye of a naturalist. In a letter of the 8th of June, 1834, to the Princess Galitzin, (the amiable and accomplished grand-daughter of the celebrated Marshal Suwarrow,) whose acquaintance he had formed at Florence, he thus expresses himself on the subject of the tour, which he had just accomplished in this interesting region: —

"Clear and beautiful are the skies in Sicily, and there is a warmth of tint about the sunsets unrivalled even in Italy. It resembles what one finds under the tropics; and so does the vegetation. It is rich and luxuriant. The palm begins to appear; the palmetto, the aloe, and the cactus adorn every road side; the superb oleander bathes its roots in almost every brook; the pomegranate

and a large species of convolvulus are every where seen. In short, the variety of flowers is greater than that of the prairies in the Western States of America, though I think their number is less. Our Rudbeckia is, I think, more beautiful than the chrysanthemum coronarium which you see all over Sicily; but there are the orange and the lemon."

After a month passed in Sicily, Mr. Lowell crossed to Malta. Here he had so far altered the original plan of his route, that he determined to make the tour of Greece before visiting Asia Minor. Accordingly, after devoting a few days to this celebrated rock, he embarked in a Greek vessel for Corfu, and arrived in that island after a tedious passage of fifteen days. When the traveller from Western Europe or America finds himself sailing along the channel which separates the Ionian Islands from the shores of continental Greece, he feels himself, at length, arrived in "the bright clime of battle and of song." In Italy and Sicily, he is still in the modern and the Western world, although numberless memorials of the past remain, and a foretaste of Eastern costume and manners presents itself. But he realizes, with full consciousness, that he is indeed on his pilgrimage, when his eyes rest upon those gems of the deep, which the skill of the Grecian minstrel has touched with a spark of immortality; — when he can say to himself, as he passes along, "On this spot was unfolded the gorgeous web of the Odyssey; from that

cliff Sappho threw herself into the sea; on my left hand lay the gardens of Alcinoüs, — and the olive, and the grape, and the orange, still cover the soil; before me rises the embattled citadel which Virgil describes; on my right are the infamous Acroceraunian rocks of Horace; and within that blue, mountain barrier, which bounds the horizon, were concealed the mystic grove and oracle of Dodona, — the cradle of the mythology of Greece." When to these recollections of antiquity are added the modern Oriental features of the scene; — the dress of the Grecian peasant or boatman, seen as you coast along the islands; the report of the musket of the Albanian, — half-shepherd, half-bandit, — as he tends his flocks on the hill-sides of the mainland; the minaret, the crescent, and the cypress grove, which mark the cities of the living, and the resting-place of the dead; — you then feel yourself departed from the language, the manners, and the faith of Christendom, and fairly entered within the vestibule of the mysterious East.

After passing a few days at Corfu, the capital of the Ionian Islands, Mr. Lowell crossed the narrow strait which separates it from the shores of Albania, and went up to Yanina, the residence of the late celebrated Ali Pacha.* The beautiful little city of Yanina, — which, in 1819, lay quietly nestled upon a promontory extend-

* From his landing on the Albanian shore, Mr. Lowell commenced the daily observation of the state of the thermometer, barometer, and hygrometer, and entered the result with precision in his Journal.

ing into a lake of moderate compass, half-surrounded by the neighbouring heights of Pindus, and, under the protection of its stern master, exhibiting for a Turkish town an unwonted air of prosperity, — was seen by Mr. Lowell just emerging from a destructive war, which had ended with the life of the aged despot. Having passed a few days here and in the neighbourhood, he pursued his tour southward, through the passes of the Suliote Mountains, apparently by the route which is rendered so familiar to us by the second Canto of Childe Harold. A part of this region has acquired a melancholy interest, as the theatre of the exploits and fall of Marco Bozzaris, and other mournful scenes of the Greek revolution. Visiting Missolonghi (where he became acquainted with the remaining members of the family of Bozzaris), Patras, the Gulf of Lepanto, the citadel of Corinth, Mycenæ, Argos, Napoli di Romania, Epidaurus, and the Island of Ægina, he arrived about the 10th of July at Athens, — "that venerable, ruined, dirty, little town," (I use his own words,) "of which the streets are most narrow and nearly impassable, but the poor remains of whose ancient taste in the arts exceed in beauty every thing I have yet seen in either Italy, Sicily, or any other portion of Greece."

But, notwithstanding his keen relish for the beauties of ancient art, it was no part of his design to make an extensive Grecian tour. In the first week of September, he took passage for the Island of Syra, which, since the downfall of the Turkish dominion in Greece, has

become the emporium of the Archipelago. This island was, at that time, the residence of the Rev. Mr. Robertson, a missionary of the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States, of whose labors, as of those of the Rev. Messrs. King and Hill, at Athens, also American missionaries, Mr. Lowell makes frequent and honorable mention in his letters, bearing witness to their visible instrumentality in promoting the regeneration of Greece. He also found, on more than one occasion in the course of his tour, that the liberal supplies sent by this country to Greece, in the time of her extremity in 1827 and 1828, were still borne in grateful recollection, and caused the American name to stand high in the affections of her citizens.

After having been detained a considerable time at Syra by want of a wind, Mr. Lowell took passage for Smyrna, where he arrived on the 24th of September, 1834. He had now reached the region which preceded even classic Greece in the march of civilization, — the shores of that Ionia where Homer lived and sung, before the light of poetry dawned on Athens. Nor are classic associations its only interest. It abounds in names that stand prominent on the mysterious page of the Apocalypse. In a letter to a friend in America, dated October 20th, he observes, "The rich and, in spite of Turkish oppression, well-cultivated valley of the Meander, adorned with cypresses and olive-trees, and filled with fig-trees and vineyards, is worthy of being compared to the broad interval lands of an Ameri-

can river. It resembles, in size and fertility, the Mohawk, and is the second largest river in Asia Minor, the Halys being the first. Near its banks are the ruins of Magnesia, Tralles, Nysa, Laodicea, Tripolis, and, above all, Hierapolis, all of which I visited. I had previously been to Ephesus and Neapolis, or Scala Nova, one of the large commercial towns of the country. I then crossed Mount Messogis in the rain, and descended into the basin of the River Hermus, visited Philadelphia, the picturesque site of Sardis, with its inaccessible citadel, and two solitary but beautiful Ionic columns; and in addition to what is sometimes called the house of Crœsus, I crossed and drank of the waters of the Pactolus, forded the Hermus by the help of a Toorkman girl and a Greek boy, went to Thyatira and Magnesia *ad Sipylum*, and crossed the steep pass of the Sipylus into the smiling plain of Smyrna."

Information of the prevalence of the plague at Constantinople, and the lateness of the season at which he had arrived on the coast of Asia Minor, prevented Mr. Lowell from executing his original purpose of entering the Black Sea, and crossing by Armenia and Georgia into Persia. It was not till he had been some time at Smyrna, that the plague had so far abated that he deemed it not unsafe, toward the end of November, to make a visit of a few days to Constantinople. Devoting, however, but a very short time to its objects of curiosity and interest, he hastened his return to Smyrna, in order to take passage by the earliest opportunity for Alexan-

dria, in Egypt. Still desirous to see as much as possible of the interior of Asia, he proposed, after ascending the Nile as far as Cairo, to enter Syria by the way of the desert of Suez, and crossing to the Euphrates, take passage in the Persian Gulf for India.

On the 9th of December, he sailed from Smyrna in a Greek brig, the *Bellerophon*, chartered by himself for the conveyance of his party and baggage. He coasted along the Islands of Mitylene, Samos, Patmos, and Rhodes, making some stop at the latter island, and, after a voyage of eighteen days, arrived at Alexandria. From the moment the traveller sets his foot upon the soil of Egypt, he meets those remains of antiquity which carry him back to a period that precedes the dates of authentic history. The obelisk, which bears the idle name of Cleopatra's Needle, is in sight as he lands. As he moves up the river, broken remnants of elder days, fragments of Norman, Saracenic, Roman, Grecian, and, lastly, Egyptian architecture, tell the tale of the political vicissitudes of this ill-fated region ; and when he reaches at length the great pyramids of Memphis, he feels himself in the actual presence of those mysterious dynasties, — which are at once forgotten and immortalized by imperishable monuments, — the ashes of whose sovereigns are laid up in mausoleums that will stand till the earth shall pass away, — whose names and titles are inscribed on obelisks and the walls of temples, from which three thousand years have not obliterated them, in characters whose import has even

been deciphered by modern sagacity, but of whose shadowy annals we still strive in vain to catch the clew.

Among Mr. Lowell's letters to his friends at this period, is one written from the summit of the great pyramid on the 12th of February, 1835. "The prospect," says he, "is most beautiful. On the one side, is the boundless desert, varied only by a few low ridges of limestone hills. Then you have heaps of sand and a surface of sand, reduced to so fine a powder, and so easily agitated by the slightest breeze, that it almost deserves the name of fluid. Then comes the rich, verdant valley of the Nile, studded with villages, adorned with green date-trees, traversed by the Father of Rivers, with the magnificent city of Cairo on its banks, but far narrower than one could wish, as it is bounded, at a distance of some fifteen miles, by the Arabian desert and the abrupt calcareous ridge of Mokattan. Immediately below the spectator lies the city of the dead, the innumerable tombs, the smaller pyramids, the Sphinx, and, still farther off, and on the same line, to the south, the pyramids of Abou Seer, Sakârà, and Dachoor."

After a short sojourn at Cairo, Mr. Lowell commenced the ascent of the Nile. He had found the temptation to visit Thebes too strong to be resisted. The universal mode of travelling in Egypt is in long, narrow boats, with cabins and awnings, propelled by very large sails, when the wind is favorable, and poled or

drawn along by hand, when it fails or is adverse. In a boat of this description, at his own disposal, (being the same which had shortly before been used by Marshal Marmont,) Mr. Lowell was able to regulate his progress with sole reference to the objects of interest by the way. It happened that Mohammed Ali, the celebrated sovereign of the country, was ascending the Nile at the same time. He was overtaken by Mr. Lowell on the 18th of February, and granted him a long private audience in his tent. His inquiries showed uncommon intelligence and vigor of mind. He sought minute information as to the military and commercial marine of the United States, and particularly as to the extent of steam navigation upon our large rivers. Having inquired in what direction Mr. Lowell proposed to pursue his journey to India, he dissuaded him from attempting to traverse Syria, on the ground of the unsettled and dangerous state of the country. He advised him to adopt the route of the Red Sea and Mocha, and tendered him his protection up to that point.

Shortly after this interview, the prosperous course of Mr. Lowell's tour, hitherto unbroken by any adverse circumstance, received an alarming check. In consequence of exposure to the evening air, and the general effect of the climate, he was severely attacked by intermittent fever. The disease yielded, at first, to the remedies with which he was provided; and, on his arrival at Thebes, he was able to explore a portion of those stupendous ruins, at all times of extreme interest,

and rendered doubly curious by the discoveries of M. Champollion. Establishing his abode on the ruins of a palace at Luxor, he surveyed and examined, as far as the state of his health would permit, the remains of those wonderful structures, on which the names, the wars, and the triumphs of a long succession of Pharaohs are recorded. Unfortunately, his recovery had been imperfect, — the season was advancing, — new exposures brought on a return of his fever, soon complicated with other complaints incident to the climate and region.

The state of his health appears to have awakened serious apprehensions in his mind. The first moment of convalescence was devoted to the completion of his last will, and to the formal statement of the principles on which he wished the important trust created by him to be administered. We are assembled, this evening, in pursuance of the testamentary provisions drawn up in the land of Egypt, on the ruins of one of the oldest seats of art and of civilization of which ruins remain, — provisions in which a great and liberal spirit, bowed down with sickness, in a foreign and a barbarous land, expressed some of its last aspirations for the welfare of his native city.

While detained by sickness at Thebes, he employed his attendants in making a collection of antiquities; and he succeeded in possessing himself of as large an amount and variety of these objects as have, probably, at any time been acquired by an American. They

consist of fragments of sculpture in granite, basalt, and alabaster, some of them with hieroglyphical inscriptions; two or three papyrus rolls; bronze figures; mummies; and a multitude of utensils and other articles illustrating the superstitions, arts, and manners of the Egyptians.

A tour in Egypt above the pyramids was not originally proposed by Mr. Lowell; and when, at length, he launched on the Nile, it does not appear that he intended to proceed beyond Thebes. While he was detained at Thebes, however, the appearance of the plague at Cairo made it dangerous for him to return to that place, on his way to Jerusalem, which he had determined, at all events, to visit, previous to embarking for India. At the same time he fell in with a young Englishman, who was disposed to undertake a tour to Upper Nubia. The opportunity of visiting the ruins of Meroë, — that mystic region, whose site is scarcely identified by modern curiosity, — the primitive cradle of the sombre civilization, which, descending the Nile, rather overshadowed than enlightened Egypt, — was too attractive to be resisted.

In order to lay in the requisite stores and make the necessary preparation for his excursion to Nubia, Mr. Lowell descended the Nile from Thebes to Syout, the capital of Upper Egypt. Here he was unfortunately delayed for more than a month; — a circumstance the more to be lamented, as the season was already quite too far advanced for the safe prosecution of a tour within the tropics. During his sojourn at Syout, he

received marked attentions from the Turkish governor of that place. He had also an opportunity of witnessing an incident of great curiosity to a European or American traveller. This was the arrival of the great caravan of Dar-four in Central Africa, which had just reached the oasis of Khargeh, at the distance from the Nile of several days' journey across the desert westward. Dar-four is stated by Mr. Lowell to have been visited but by a single European traveller, the Englishman Browne, about forty years ago. The great caravan to the Nile is despatched once in two years, and is two or three months in crossing the desert. It usually consists of about six hundred merchants and pilgrims, four thousand slaves, and six thousand camels, laden with ivory, tamarinds, ostrich-feathers, and other articles of African merchandise, and with provisions for sustenance on the way. Nothing in the intercourse of life, as we know it, can give any idea of these caravans. As they afford the only opportunities for communication across the waste of sand, the whole life and action of the central region, its industry and trade, its social relations, all its temporal interests, in greater or less degree, and even its religion, are connected with the caravan. This alone unites the interior of Africa with the world; for this alone furnishes a means of crossing the frightful desert, which insulates its inhabitants from the rest of the species.

"The immense number of tall and lank, but powerful camels," says Mr. Lowell, in his Journal under this

date, "was the first object that attracted our attention in the caravan. The long and painful journey, besides killing perhaps a quarter of the original number, had reduced the remainder to the condition of skeletons, and rendered their natural ugliness still more appalling. Their skins were stretched, like moistened parchment scorched by the fire, over their strong ribs. Their eyes stood out from the shrunken forehead, and the arched back-bone of the animals rose sharp and prominent above their sides, like a butcher's cleaver. The fat that usually accompanies the middle of the back-bone, and forms with it the camel's bunch, had entirely disappeared. They had occasion for it, as well as for the reservoir of water, with which a bountiful nature has furnished them, to enable them to undergo the laborious journey and the painful fasts of the desert. Their sides were gored with the heavy burdens they had carried.

"The sun was setting. The little slaves of the caravan had just driven in, from their dry pasture of thistles, parched grass, and withered herbage, these most patient and obedient animals, so essential to travellers in the great deserts, and without which it would be as impossible to cross them as to traverse the ocean without vessels. Their conductors made them kneel down, and gradually poured beans between their lengthened jaws. The camels, not having been used to this food, did not like it; they would have greatly preferred a bit of old, worn-out mat, as we have found, to our cost, in the desert. The most mournful cries, some-

thing between the braying of an ass and the lowing of a cow, assailed our ears in all directions, because these poor creatures were obliged to eat what was not good for them; but they offered no resistance otherwise. The camels of Dar-four are much taller than those of Egypt and of the neighbouring Bedouins, or Arabs, as they call themselves; and I should think them quite as large as those of Asia Minor. They are said to bear the fatigue of a long journey, in the desert, better than the Egyptian camels, and even better than those of the Arabs; but, when transported to the Nile, it is said that the change of food and water kills most of them in a little time."

It was June before the preparations of Mr. Lowell were completed, and he was able to resume his journey up the Nile. The thermometer now frequently stood at one hundred and fifteen degrees, and he speaks of the temperature of eighty-seven degrees, as appearing delightfully cool. On the 9th of June, he had again reached Thebes, and on the 11th, was at Esneh, on the Nile. On the evening of that day, he was attacked by the painful disease of the eyes, which is so prevalent in Egypt, and by other and more serious complaints incident to tropical regions. He was confined to his bed, by these maladies, for three weeks, at Philæ, an island situated just above the cataracts of the Nile, and four weeks more at Wady Halfa, just below the second cataract. It is needless to describe what he must have endured from the heat and disease, in midsummer, within the tropics. Thinking

the exercise of the saddle would be beneficial, notwithstanding the prostration of his health, he left his boat at Wady Halfa, mounted the horse (an Arabian) which he had brought with him from Asia Minor, and, in that way, proceeded into the province of Dongóla. He reached what is supposed to be the neighbourhood of the ancient Meroë, about the middle of September. By taking a land route, though he avoided the great bend in the Nile, a considerable part of his journey from Dongóla to El Metemneh lay through a desert.

He had now penetrated far into Ethiopia, — a country which makes so conspicuous a figure in the geography of Homer and the sacred writers. Its inhabitants were the original founders of the civilization of Egypt. The queen of Sheba was an Ethiopian princess; and Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, is named in the evangelical history. Nothing can exceed the present desolation and misery of this once favored region.* Mr. Lowell pursued his journey as far as Khartoom, a modern city, founded by the bey of Egypt, as the capital of his kingdom of Sennaar, the last of his conquests in this direction. It lies at the junction of the two great branches which form the Nile, the Blue and the White Rivers, in the latitude of fifteen degrees, — the latitude of Honduras, the mouth of the Senegal, and of

* The degree of interest taken by Mr. Lowell in its antiquities can only be adequately understood from the inspection of his Journal, which is filled with the result of the minutest observations and measurements, made under the depressing influence of severe disease and a tropical climate.

Goa, — and probably as unhealthy, for a northern constitution, as any parallel between the equator and the pole The city of Khartoom contained about fifteen thousand inhabitants, when Mr. Lowell visited it, and was the residence of Koorshood Pacha, a Turk of distinction in the military service of the bey of Egypt, and governor of the kingdoms or provinces of Dongóla and Sennaar. The kind offices and the protection of this officer were of great service to Mr. Lowell, both at Khartoom and on his journey to the Red Sea.

After a few days' residence at the capital of Sennaar, the state of his health, and the progress of the season, (it was now about the middle of November,) warned him that it was time to shape his course toward India. To this end, it was necessary again to descend the Nile as far as the city of Berber, in Lower Nubia, to cross the desert of Nubia from that place to Sowākeen, on the Red Sea, and there embark for Mocha. Koorshood Pacha furnished him with letters to the governors both of Berber and Sowākeen, without which it would have been difficult to find the means of transportation. A detachment of troops was about marching from Sennaar, to renëforce the army of the bey of Egypt in Arabia; and, as they would proceed by the same route, and cross the Red Sea at the same place, they would, of course, monopolize the scanty means of conveyance. But the recommendation of Koorshood removed all obstacles, and procured Mr. Lowell a kind reception from the governor of Berber or El Mekheroff; and a journey

from that place of fourteen days, on camels, across the desert, brought him to Sowākeen, a small port on the western coast of the Red Sea.

Here, also, in virtue of the powerful influence exerted in his favor from the capital, he was enabled, without difficulty, to engage a small vessel navigated by Arabs, to transport himself, his attendants, and baggage, to Mocha. He embarked on the 16th of December, 1835, and arrived, in four or five days, at Massôwá, another small port on the western coast of the Red Sea, in about sixteen degrees north latitude, where he had agreed to stop, for the convenience of the party navigating his barque. On the 22d of December, at half past four o'clock in the afternoon, he resumed his voyage. In the course of the day, a disaster occurred, which is graphically described in the following letter. I introduce it entire, as affording a specimen of Mr. Lowell's personal adventures, and as evincing no small degree of energy, under enfeebling disease and circumstances of considerable embarrassment.

'Island of Dàssa, near Massôwá, and still nearer Dahalar, Red Sea, 24th Dec., 1835, 6 1-2 A. M.

"I return thanks to God, who has preserved me. We have saved our lives, which we expected to lose yesterday, at about this hour. I have even saved a considerable part of my effects. When I was a youth, I longed for a shipwreck. I thought it would make me a second Robinson Crusoe; but I confess that I learned, with no small satisfaction, yesterday afternoon,

that the island on which we were cast, was not a desert one. Most of the islands in the Red Sea are dry, flat, and desolate, without water, and uninhabited either by men or quadrupeds. This has several small mountains, is verdant at this season, and is occupied by people of the tribe of Dankali, of whom Bruce gives some account. They were formerly subject to the neighbouring tribe of Naeeb, and are now subject to the Pacha of Egypt.

"We left Massôwá, and took, as I supposed, our last look at the lofty, flat-topped Abyssinian mountains at half past four, P. M., on the 22d. We had a fresh north-easterly breeze, and, as usual during the rainy season, a lowering sky. After sunset, a land breeze from those mountains set in. The wind freshened; it began to rain; it poured. The water passed through my mat-topped litter, as though it had been a sieve. I called Yanni twice. He spread the tent over my litter, and got a ducking himself, before he retired under the little after-deck. All was useless. I got wet to the skin, and thought myself unlucky. In the mean time, our seamen struck their awkward *latine* sail, which is only fit for fair weather, and attempted to anchor; but the anchor was brought up by the end of its cable before reaching bottom. They were aware that they were surrounded by shoals, but neither they nor their pilot knew their precise position. They thought it best, therefore, to trust to fortune; and, as it rained hard, every one of them got under cover and went to sleep. This I

learned afterwards; had I known it at the time, I should have interrupted their slumbers. The vessel drifted at the pleasure of the wind, and there was neither pilot nor sailor to heave the lead nor sound with a pole, which is their Arab fashion.

"At the end of several hours, we struck on a coral reef. Then all hands jumped overboard to push the vessel off the rocks. My *saïs* and cook joined the crew in this duty; but a fresh north-west wind, accompanied by rain and much mist, rendered their efforts unavailing. I retreated to my covered litter again, and put what gold was not already in my broad Turkish girdle, into my pocket. I did the same with my letters of credit. The water now entered fast through all the seams in the larboard side of the vessel. The men could not bail the schooner fast enough; and, as she continued to strike, it was evident the leak would become worse. Yanni now called out, 'They are throwing our cases overboard!' True enough; the hold of the little vessel had been crowded with my effects, and I now saw them floating alongside. There went my best tent, for its poles kept it from sinking, and the waves soon carried it out of sight. Here lay the box that contained my reflecting circle, and another with my Parisian rifle. These two boxes were large, and, besides the above and various perishable articles, were filled with a variety of European luxuries and provisions. Macaroni, olives, tongues, the best of the biscuit, the best of the rice, sugar, and tea, were among the number.

I wished to keep them till the last, but they were overboard before I had time to speak. The men then came to several heavy packs of elephants' teeth, which I had allowed them to take in place of ballast. They of course went directly to the bottom. The vessel continued to settle down, and, before the operation of lightening her was concluded, it was evident that it was of no use.

"We struck at six o'clock, A.M., a half an hour before sunrise; — it was now seven o'clock, but so hazy that we could with difficulty distinguish distant objects. No land was in sight, and the weather was still rough. We were fast enough on the rocks, but the danger was that the schooner might go to pieces there. All my people behaved well. Yanni alone, the youngest of them, showed, by a few occasional exclamations, that it is hard to look Death in the face at seventeen, when all the illusions of life are entire. At half past seven, it began to clear up, and the pilot now said that he knew where we were. We saw high mountains to the west and south of us, and land at the distance of three or four miles. We gave three of our water-skins to the pilot, the owner's son, and the most intelligent of the sailors. Having filled them with air, they went in search of assistance, leaving the inefficient *raïs* and six hands on board, besides a passenger chap, the second they had smuggled aboard without my permission.

"It now appeared, that, if we were to put on board again those articles that had been floating alongside,

we not only might stand a chance of saving them, but should fix the schooner more firmly in its present position. I urged this last consideration on the *raïs*, but he either could not or would not do any thing. My drogoman now behaved well. He threw himself into the sea, and, swimming about there, handed me my cloak, and relocked the case from which he had taken it. All my servants, except Antonio, who was disabled with a fit of the rheumatism, went also into the water, and, getting hold of our cases, shamed the sailors into lending us a hand. With their assistance, we soon got most of our articles on board again; and they were now so well persuaded of the utility of the plan, — for the movement of the vessel became less, — that they began to hoist in their elephants' teeth. The water in the hold was now sensibly less, although it flowed in and out with every wave. This I supposed was owing to the fall of the wind, not thinking of the tide, which is generally small in the Red Sea. At Sowākeen, it is about eighteen inches; but here, so much nearer the ocean, it is much higher.

"Our messengers had swum (on the skins) to a long sand-bank that lay to the south of us; and then walked upon it, as though it had been dry land, and so it is at low tide. It was about three quarters of a mile distant. We waited three or four hours. No people, no boats appeared, except one, which sailed directly from us. I urged the men to make a raft, for I thought we were nearer the shore than we really were. We lashed

together all our loose spars, and at length the raft was made. It was noon, and the water had now risen again in the hold. The tide changed at about eight o'clock; but as we were in a gulf, I could not tell how long or how high the flood might rise. The seamen were as ignorant as the rest of us on that subject. We put one case on the little raft, and two men, swimming alongside, conducted it to the sand-bank in about an hour. They then did not take the trouble to land it, but, Arab fashion, went ashore and lay down upon the sand. Finding they had no notion of coming back, I sent my *saïs* after them, with directions to bring the raft and take another case. At half past two o'clock, my *saïs* returned, singing, and blowing in one of my empty powder canisters, (which he had picked up,) as if it were a day of rejoicing. He brought with him the raft, the two men, and two of our messengers, the pilot remaining behind. As for the case, which they might have brought as well as not, they had sent it adrift to save trouble. It is thus with the whole African and Arab race, with whom I have had intercourse. You can trust them no farther than you have them under your eye, and that eye wide open. They return you the compliment; for they are the most mistrustful of mortals; and with reason, considering the company they keep.

"The messengers reported, that they had visited a village, and had made known my offer, that, for the preservation of my effects, I would give a hundred

dollars, and that a little boat was now on her way to us with the pilot. According to the owner's son, she would carry two zembals, that is, about three hundred weight, of grain, and he proposed throwing my cases overboard again. As such a boat could not take the tenth part of my effects, and as I had some hopes of towing the boxes after me, and knew that the men would certainly get rid of them as soon as my back was turned, I consented to this measure. Every thing now went into the sea, even cases that had before been spared. I kept nothing back, except my trunks of wearing apparel, my books, writing materials, a leather bag, into which I had thrust my Journals, my pistols, certain gilt French bagatelles for presents, and a few other articles. All my floating property was lashed together, and we waited again. At length, the little boat hove in sight, and appeared a good deal larger than had been said; but there was no wind, and she approached slowly. But it was now high tide. The water had risen to the level of the little after-deck; my trunks were moved up still higher to avoid it; the sand beach I have mentioned had long since disappeared; and I could perceive uncertainty and alarm gathering again on the faces of my people. The cook, especially, was much discouraged, and only the *saïs* retained his accustomed gayety. He was sure he could save both himself and the horse. I told Antonio to tell him I should make him a present of fifty piastres, that is, nearly two months' wages, for his good behavior.

This put him in still better spirits. I was not sure myself that the tide would not rise still higher. It had already risen about three and a half or four feet, and was, in fact, at its highest point.

"Presently the drogoman exclaimed, 'The hands are going to quit the vessel, and I shall quit too.' His threat did not disturb me, as I knew the poor fellow had not wherewithal to buy a dinner without me; but I did not much relish being left alone on the deck by the seamen. I had always counted, if it came to the worst, on having their aid and the raft to put me on shore. As for swimming, I have not strength for that, especially in my clothes, and so thorough a ducking and exposure might of itself make an end of me. I entered my litter again to get a pistol, which I thrust into my girdle. Yanni exclaimed, 'They are carrying away our raft!' I stepped again on deck, and, sure enough, the men were all in the water, foolishly attempting to put one of their packs of four great elephants' teeth upon a raft that could scarcely carry more than one. 'That raft is mine,' I exclaimed; 'I made it, and it is tied with my cord, for the purpose of saving my effects.' These people were accustomed to hear me speak with the tone of a master; they hesitated, and then slowly made off with the raft. 'Quit that raft,' said I; 'I will shoot the first man who attempts to move it!' I presented my pistol, and they all left the raft, much to my relief, for I should have fired had they persevered. I gave my second pistol to Antonio, but it was now clear that the tide was beginning to fall. The promised

boat approached, and the men now thought only of saving their schooner, — passing, with the facility of children, from one idea to another diametrically opposed to it. As for their ivory, it was safe enough at the bottom of the sea, where they could pick it up again when they liked. I told them I wished all my baggage was in elephants' teeth.

"The boat arrived alongside at last. She proved large enough to take all my trunks and effects on board, that had escaped the sea. We took the cases, that were lashed together, in tow, and left behind the horse, three sheep, a quantity of water-soaked *dourah*, and other articles, some of which were lying at the bottom of the hold. We quitted the wreck at half-past three P. M., and the horse was led overboard at the same time. I hoped he might follow us, believing the village to be much nearer than it was. The horse soon returned, with his *saïs*, to the wreck. There were three men in the little boat besides my servants, the owner's son, the passenger, who pretended to be a sailor, and myself. We had little wind, and the men were neither disposed to row nor pole with energy. They complained that the cases in tow impeded our progress, and were on the point of cutting them loose, saying they would return for them to-morrow. As I considered the measure tantamount to the loss or spoiling of every article in them, I resisted it. The night closed upon us. Presently they said, 'We will leave you and two men on board. Every body else will assist in conducting the floating cases to the shore, where we shall find them to-morrow.'

'Very well,' I replied; 'only Antonio is sick, and must stay with me.' So one of the boatmen, and the owner's son, and a boy, jumped into the sea. I made my cook accompany them, but did not think it best to oblige Yanni or the drogoman to follow suit. There remained the pretended sailor, who now professed to have a headache. I told him he passed himself as a sailor on board of the vessel I had chartered, and he must now take the place of one. So he had to jump overboard. I assented the more readily to this arrangement, as we had now a fresh breeze, which I thought would soon part the towing line. We had kept hitherto an east-south-east-course. We now veered to south-east and south-south-east, and in another hour arrived at the village. Our other people were all on the beach, having, as I expected, left the cases adrift. After some delay, we got a small room in one of the houses, and were all asleep by midnight.

"This morning, I gave fifty piastres to the boatmen who came to our assistance yesterday. This pleased them exceedingly. Two thirds of my effects are still afloat, and if they bring them to-day, I shall give them fifty piastres more. I hope to start to-morrow for Massôwá, where I shall engage another vessel.

"Five o'clock, P. M. Antonio has returned. The horse is here; so are the sheep. The floating cases of yesterday are picked up. To-morrow I shall know what we have lost. Many articles are damaged, but

the eatables chiefly will compose the division which is wholly lost.

"Yours, affectionately,

"JOHN LOWELL, JUN."

The following day, Mr. Lowell returned to Massôwá with his rescued baggage and effects; and, engaging there a vessel for Mocha, reached that place on the first of January, exhausted by the effects of long-continued disease, and recent fatigue and exposure.

He was fortunate enough to meet, at Mocha, with a surgeon attached to the service of the British East India Company, and, as he thought, derived important benefit from his professional advice. But the scene was drawing toward a close. The disease which had hung upon him for seven or eight months, — the merciless heats of a Nubian summer, — the fatigue of his excursion through the desert between the Nile and the Red Sea, — with the shock given to an enfeebled system by his shipwreck, and the want of rest and medical treatment for a month afterwards, — had undermined his constitution. The last letters written by him bear date the 17th of January, 1836, at Mocha; at which time he was in daily expectation of the arrival of the British steamboat, on her way to Bombay. No farther intelligence was ever received directly from himself, although his Journal is continued till within a few days of his decease. The steamboat *Hugh Lindsay* arrived at Mocha, from Suez, on the 20th of January; and, on

the 23d, Mr. Lowell took passage in her for Bombay, which place he reached on the 10th of the following month. No improvement had taken place in his health; and, after feebly struggling with his disease about three weeks, he died, at Bombay, on the 4th of March, 1836.

The unadorned narrative, which I have thus attempted, will supersede the necessity of a labored delineation of his character. Its prominent traits are conspicuous in the events of his life. Every one perceives his uncommon energy and perseverance; but it is impossible to do full justice to his resolution and firmness of purpose, without the perusal of his Letter-books and Journal. Nothing less than an eminent degree of these qualities would have enabled him to pursue his journey into Upper Nubia, in a state of health which would have been deemed by most persons to require the care and comforts of home. He not only persevered, under these circumstances, in continuing his journey far within the tropics, in midsummer, but explored the natural features of the country through which he passed, and the remains of antiquity visited by the way, and recorded the result of his observations with a minuteness, which would be thought highly creditable to the diligence of a person in perfect health. Many incidents also occurred during his travels in the barbarous districts of Asia Minor, Egypt, and, as we have seen by occasion of his shipwreck, in the Red Sea, evincing no common degree of personal firmness and courage.

From those whose acquaintance with Mr. Lowell was more intimate than my own, I understand that a modesty bordering upon diffidence gave to his manners, in general society, an appearance of coldness and reserve, which might lead the stranger to mistake his real character, in which there was a mixture of great strength and delicacy of feeling. The kindness of his disposition, and the warmth of his heart, shone out in the circle of his familiar friends, and diffused a genial influence on all around him.

The purity and delicacy of his moral principles were wholly unimpaired by his large intercourse with the world. Exposed, in youth, to the worst examples, on ship-board and in foreign countries, he escaped unhurt, and carried forward into life the innocence of childhood. To a rigid and punctilious sense of justice, and a veneration for truth, he added that lofty sense of honor, which is necessary to the moral heroism of character.

He was a firm believer of the great truths of natural and revealed religion. The sense of an overruling and directing Providence was never absent from his thoughts, and is frequently expressed in his letters. The Scriptures were the companions of his travels; and, by the specific directions given for his foundation, a course of lectures upon the evidences of Christianity was provided for.

His range of general reading was extensive, and his attainments above the common standard of scholarship.

They were greatly extended, on his travels, by a diligent study of the languages of the several countries through which he passed, including the modern Greek and vulgar Arabic. He also devoted himself to the study of mineralogy, while passing some time at Edinburgh, in the summer of 1833. His observations of the barometer, of the thermometer, of the hygrometer, and of the course of the winds, are recorded with great precision, and evince familiarity with philosophical instruments. Barometrical estimates are made of the height of the various positions on his travels, where such calculations would be of interest. The state of agriculture, commerce, and particularly manufactures, seems everywhere to have received much of his attention; and valuable information on these subjects is contained in his Journal. He appears to have inherited a talent and taste for mathematics. Calculations, of considerable extent and intricacy, but in an incomplete and fragmentary state, apparently designed to ascertain the cubical content of the larger pyramids, are found among his notes. It is to be remembered, however, that he did not live to enter the field which was the great object of his undertaking. It is probable that large stores of knowledge, gathered up in a singularly retentive memory, were lost, at his decease, without leaving a trace in the Note-books of his journeyings, for the reason that he was arrested by the last summons, before he had set foot upon the region, in reference to which his reading had been for a long time

directed. Notwithstanding this circumstance, his Letter-books and Journals are, throughout, those of an acute, sagacious, and well-instructed traveller, and would form, I am persuaded, in a judicious selection, a very acceptable present to the reading public. The diligence with which his correspondence was pursued, bears witness to the strength of his domestic attachments, as it is principally addressed to the members of his family. His fortitude and considerateness are manifested in the infrequence of his allusions to the state of suffering and danger, in which he had so often occasion to write.

With his first serious illness in Upper Egypt, he turned his thoughts to the land of his birth, and the completion of his testamentary provision for the benefit of his native city. The object of his bequest, as set forth in his will, is "the maintenance and support of public lectures, to be delivered in Boston, upon philosophy, natural history, the arts and sciences, or any of them, as the trustee shall, from time to time, deem expedient for the promotion of the moral, and intellectual, and physical instruction or education of the citizens of Boston." After a partial recovery from a severe attack of disease, from which he suffered for five weeks, — in a codicil to his will written amidst the ruins of Thebes, from a place called Luxor, an Arab village, the whole of which is situated on the remains of an ancient palace, — Mr. Lowell transmits to his kinsman and trustee his detailed directions for

the administration of his trust. Of these, the most important are expressed as follows:

"As the most certain and the most important part of true philosophy appears to me to be that, which shows the connexion between God's revelations and the knowledge of good and evil implanted by him in our nature, I wish a course of lectures to be given on natural religion, showing its conformity to that of our Saviour.

"For the more perfect demonstration of the truth of those moral and religious precepts, by which alone, as I believe, men can be secure of happiness in this world and that to come, I wish a course of lectures to be delivered on the historical and internal evidences in favor of Christianity. I wish all disputed points of faith and ceremony to be avoided, and the attention of the lecturers to be directed to the moral doctrines of the Gospel, stating their opinion, if they will, but not engaging in controversy, even on the subject of the penalty for disobedience.

"As the prosperity of my native land, New England, which is sterile and unproductive, must depend hereafter, as it has heretofore depended, first, on the moral qualities, and, secondly, on the intelligence and information of its inhabitants, I am desirous of trying to contribute towards this second object also; — and I wish courses of lectures to be established on physics and chemistry, with their application to the arts; also, on

botany, zoölogy, geology, and mineralogy, connected with their particular utility to man.

"After the establishment of these courses of lectures, should disposable funds remain, or, in process of time, be accumulated, the trustee may appoint courses of lectures to be delivered on the literature and eloquence of our language, and even on those of foreign nations, if he see fit. He may, also, from time to time, establish lectures on any subject that, in his opinion, the wants and taste of the age may demand.

"As infidel opinions appear to me injurious to society, and easily to insinuate themselves into a man's dissertations on any subject, however remote from religion, no man ought to be appointed a lecturer, who is not willing to declare, and who does not previously declare, his belief in the divine revelation of the Old and New Testaments, leaving the interpretation thereof to his own conscience."

Such were the enlightened provisions of Mr. Lowell for the benefit of his native city. Surrounded by the most enduring monuments of human grandeur, he felt how little can be done to elevate the moral nature of man, by exhausting the quarry and piling its blocks of granite to the clouds. As far as we can judge from the unparalleled number and gigantic dimensions of the temples, palaces, gateways, alleys of sphinxes, and cemeteries, that cover the site, and fill up the environs of Egyptian Thebes, the resources of the monarchs,

who made it their residence, must have exceeded those of the Roman Cæsars, when the world obeyed their sceptre. But, when we inquire after the influence of this mighty monarchy on the welfare of the human race, — when we ask for the lights of humanity that adorned its annals, — for the teachers of truth, the discoverers in science, the champions of virtue, the statesmen, the legislators, the friends of man, — it is all a dreary blank. Not one bright name is preserved in their history; not one great or generous deed, if ever performed, has escaped from oblivion; not a word, ever uttered or written by the myriads of rational beings, the lords or the subjects of this mighty empire, has been embalmed in the memory of mankind. A beam of light from the genius of a modern French scholar, cast upon the sculptured sides of obelisks and temples, has redeemed the names and titles of forgotten Pharaohs from ages of oblivion; but no moral Champollion can pour a transforming ray into the essential character of the Egyptian monarchy, and make it aught else than one unbroken record of superstition, ignorance, and slavery.

Our lamented fellow-citizen, well versed in the history of ancient times, musing amidst the ruins of this unconsecrated magnificence, seems, with a yearning heart, while the hand of disease still lay upon him, to have desired, as far as an individual could effect it, to secure his beloved native land from the blighting influence of those causes, which preyed upon the vitals

of this primal seat of empire. These causes were well known to him, — known from history, — known from their existence at the present hour, in the same wretched region. There was no free cultivation of intellect in Egypt, — no popular education, — no public liberty. The resources of the monarchy were lavished on the wars and luxury of its princes. The soul-crushing despotism of mystery checked all developement of the common mind. In consequence of the slavery of *caste*, religion, — instead of being a source of light, of social improvement, and happiness, — was an additional instrument of subjection. It chiefly employed its energies in the disgusting art of preventing the clay that perishes from returning to its kindred dust. Nor was this the worst. The priesthood made themselves the exclusive depositaries of learning. If we can trust the accounts of the ancient writers, the import of those hieroglyphical characters in which the Egyptian wisdom is recorded, was a mystery known only to the priests, and those to whom, in their secluded cells, they chose to confide it. Well might it have been expected that the knowledge of it would perish. It had no root in the intelligence of the people; it was the secret of a caste, and it died out with the privileged order by which it was engrossed. The pyramids themselves could not crumble, — the sculptured granite, in that mild climate, could not lose its deeply-graven character; but, instead of handing down an intelligent record of the monarchs who reared their mountain

masses, and now slumber in their monumental caverns, they stand but as eternal mementoes how perishable is all glory, how fleeting is all duration, but that of the improved mind.

The few sentences penned, with a tired hand, by our fellow-citizen, on the top of a palace of the Pharaohs, will do more for human improvement, than, for aught that appears, was done by all of that gloomy dynasty that ever reigned. I scruple not to affirm, that, in the directions given by him for a course of popular instruction, — illustrative of the great truths of natural religion and the evidences of Christianity, and unfolding the stores of natural science and useful knowledge, — to be dispensed without restriction to an entire community, — there is a better hope that mental activity will be profitably kindled, thought put in salutary motion, the connexion of truth with the uses of life traced out, and the condition of man benefited, than in all the councils, rescripts, exploits, and institutions of Sesostris and his line. I am persuaded, that more useful knowledge, higher views of the works of God, deeper and more searching glimpses into the mysteries of nature, will be communicated in the course of lectures, which will commence next Friday, than lies hidden in the hieroglyphics that cover the Egyptain temples, from the cataracts to the mouth of the Nile, although every character, according to M. Arago's suggestion, should be copied by the Daguerreotype, and fully explained by the key of Champollion. Let the foundation of Mr.

Lowell stand on the principles prescribed by him; let the fidelity with which it is now administered continue to direct it; and no language is emphatic enough to do full justice to its importance. It will be, from generation to generation, a perennial source of public good, — a dispensation of sound science, of useful knowledge, of truth in its most important associations with the destiny of man. These are blessings which cannot die. They will abide, when the sands of the desert shall have covered what they have hitherto spared of the Egyptian temples; and they will render the name of Lowell, in all wise and moral estimation, more truly illustrious, than that of any Pharaoh engraven on their walls. These belong to the empire of the mind, which alone, of human things, is immortal, and they will remain as a memorial of his Christian liberality, when all that is material shall have vanished as a scroll.

NOTE.

(SEE PAGE XXIV.)

SINCE the manuscript of the foregoing Memoir was sent to the press,* the sudden and lamented decease of Mr. JOHN LOWELL has removed the reasons of delicacy which prevented his being prominently mentioned among those of his family who deserve a high rank among our public benefactors. It would not be easy to name an individual, in the last generation, who, either in public or private life, has made himself so extensively felt in the community as Mr. Lowell, and this by the unaided force of personal influence.

He entered upon the practice of the law before he attained his majority, and, rising rapidly to the highest rank in the profession, measured himself, while yet a young man, with those who stood at its head in Massachusetts. Exhausted in a few years by the labors of his profession, and by the action of a fervent mind upon a susceptible frame, he was compelled, at the age of thirty-five, to abandon the pursuit, in which he had already acquired fame and fortune, and to seek the restoration of his health in a foreign voyage. His letters from Europe, published in the "Monthly Anthology," display the extent and accuracy of his observation, and the vigor of his style.

After three years spent in Europe, he returned to America, and passed the residue of his life as a private citizen, without resuming

* The Memoir was first printed, in a separate form, in the year 1840.

his professional pursuits, or accepting any public office. He took, however, an active part in the political controversies of the day, and exercised a powerful influence over public opinion. Those party divisions which had their origin in the French Revolution, and the various questions touching the foreign relations of the country that grew out of it, were then at their height. Mr. Lowell entered with earnestness into the discussion of these questions in the public journals, and, after the decease of Mr. Ames, in 1808, possessed a greater ascendency, than any other person in New England, over the minds of those who were opposed to the national administration. He was, however, as a political writer, not more intrepid and uncompromising than he was fair and honorable. He probably enjoyed as much of the respect of his opponents, as it was possible to award to one whose opinions were conceived and expressed with equal firmness and ardor. It was universally known, that no desire for the honors or emoluments of office moved his pen; that he neither sought, nor could be induced to accept, any public station whatever. Those who differed from him in opinion, did justice to the honesty of his purpose, and the purity of his personal character.

No one witnessed with greater satisfaction than Mr. Lowell, the subsidence of party spirit, which took place in this country in consequence of the general pacification in Europe and America in 1815. From this time forward, during the quarter of a century which has since elapsed, it is believed that he took no part in the discussion of the various topics of political interest, which successively presented themselves, and which have recently formed the basis of a new organization of parties. Dividing the year between his residence in Boston and his farm in Roxbury, he gave himself, both in town and country, to the pursuits of private life, and especially to horticulture and agriculture, (which he thoroughly understood, both in theory and practice,) and to the promotion of the various public, literary, and charitable institutions. He was, for many years, a most influential member of the Corporation of Harvard University, (a place now filled, in the third generation, by his son, Mr. John Amory Lowell, the sole

trustee of the Lowell Institute;) he was among the most active and efficient promoters of the establishment of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and of the Provident Institution for Savings in the City of Boston; he took the lead, about twenty years ago, in the measures adopted for increasing the usefulness of the Boston Athenæum; and was, for several years, the most prominent member, and the president of the board of trustees, of the Massachusetts Agricultural Society. In whatever he engaged, he brought to it his whole heart; and wherever his services were given, it was, — not by assumption, but by the necessity of his nature, the energy of his character, and the willing deference of others, — as a leader. The great secret of his influence was his entire and unsuspected disinterestedness.

But it was only in social intercourse, and the relations of private and domestic life, that the beauty and worth of Mr. Lowell's character were fully displayed. He was animated by the loftiest sense of personal honor; his heart was the home of the kindest feelings; and, without a shade of selfishness, he considered wealth to be no otherwise valuable, but as a powerful instrument of doing good. His liberality went to the extent of his means; and, where they stopped, he exercised an almost unlimited control over the means of others. It was difficult to resist the contagion of his enthusiasm; for it was the enthusiasm of a strong, cultivated, and practical mind. He possessed colloquial powers of the highest order, and a flow of unstudied eloquence never surpassed, and rarely, as with him, united with the command of an accurate, elegant, and logical pen. It was impossible for him to enter into a social circle, however intelligent, which he was not able, unconsciously and without forethought, to hold in willing attention, by the charms of his conversation. He had a deep sense of the truths and hopes of the Christian faith, and never alluded to them, nor countenanced an allusion, but with that gravity and seriousness which belong to the highest interest of man.

The declining state of his health led him, within the last few years, to withdraw himself almost wholly from society. He passed a winter, two years ago, in the West Indies, highly enjoying the genial climate,

studying with delight the boundless profusion of the tropical Flora, but with no substantial improvement of his health. On the 11th of the present month, (March, 1840,) he died at his fireside in Boston, suddenly, and without pain, at the age of seventy years.

The last time I saw him was at the delivery of the preceding Discourse, on the evening of the 2d of January. He was pleased then to express his kind approval of my humble effort to do justice to the munificent foundation of his nephew; and it is with deep sensibility that I now bring it to a close, with this feeble tribute to the memory of one of the earliest, kindest, and most respected of the friends of my youth.

COURSE I.

GENERAL SCHEME OF THE EVIDENCES.

LECTURE I.

ON THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

In the arrangement of his munificent foundation for a system of public instruction by means of Lectures, the late Mr. Lowell, while he gave to his Trustee a large discretion in the selection of subjects, was careful to specify a small number to be permanently retained upon the list. Of these prescribed subjects two are "Natural Religion" and "The Evidences of Christianity." "As the most certain and most important part of true philosophy," he writes, "appears to me to be that which shows the connexion between God's revelations and the knowledge of good and evil implanted by him in our nature, I wish a course of lectures to be given on Natural Religion, showing its conformity to that of our Saviour. And for the more perfect demonstration of those moral and religious precepts, by which alone, as I believe, men can be sure of happiness in this world and in that to come,

I wish a course of lectures to be delivered on the historical and internal evidences in favor of Christianity." The sound and sagacious mind of our Founder discerned the close connexion between the prosperity of that community to which he was proposing to be a benefactor through all coming time, and the prevalence within it of an enlightened Christian faith. Well versed in the history of his native city and commonwealth, he had not failed to perceive how much of their past honor and well-being was due to the religious element in their character. He had diligently studied the history of nations and the constitution of man, and understood the indispensableness of a religious influence to the safety and improvement alike of individuals and of masses. Persuaded, by independent investigations of his own clear and upright understanding, of those realities which only Christianity assures, and taught by a varied experience their infinite worth to the soul, he was anxious to promote their beneficent influence, to the utmost of such agency as he might exert.

I have undertaken to read a few Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity. On a subject so often treated heretofore, and with so much ability and learning, it will hardly be expected that I shall be able to produce any thing absolutely new; and though I might easily have avoided much of the triteness with which my course of remark may be thought chargeable, by selecting some disconnected portions of the argument for minute and full illus-

tration, it has appeared to me, that, even at the risk of presenting what may have less than some hearers might desire of the attraction of novelty, it was the duty of the first lecturer on this subject to begin by calling attention to its general outline, to which, in any future remarks, he might then advantageously refer. And it is my duty further to remind my audience that, necessarily, a thorough discussion of the subject would not only be a much more extended one than the time proposed to be occupied would admit, but would run into details of fact and argument more suitable for the leisurely consideration of the closet, than for such attention as can be given by the most intelligent public assembly. I should unavoidably disappoint any, who should listen to me with the expectation of hearing so much as a general statement even of all the reasons present to my own mind for regarding Christianity as a religion of divine origin. Indeed, it will be indispensable for us to confine our attention, in great part, to the *methods of proof* on which reliance is chiefly to be placed, instead of extending our observations to the great variety of particulars, which in the application of these methods would demand to be considered. And I am the more reconciled to this necessity, from the persuasion that, in all times when the subject has been discussed, the theory of Christian apologetics has been the great object of attack, and mistakes concerning it the great means of delusion ; while a plain common sense, unembarrassed by metaphysical subtil-

ties, and exercising itself on the substantial facts, has been comparatively little likely to be at fault.

Should I state the question, to which the Evidences of Christianity relate, to be this, namely, Whether the faith taught by Jesus of Nazareth and his Apostles was a direct supernatural revelation from God, I should state it as it actually lies before my own view. But I will not assume this, at the outset, to be a correct statement, because it is my duty to find a point of departure upon ground common to my own mind with the minds of all whom I address; and it may be that some would deny the issue thus made to be the true one, and would say that credit might be due to Christianity, though not in the character of a supernatural revelation from the Deity, yet in some other. I accept, therefore, a different and more comprehensive statement of the question, in which it stands as follows; — Is there sufficient proof that the religion of Jesus presents a correct exhibition of the religious relations, duty, and prospects of man? I believe such to be the circumstances of the case, that we can only be assured that the religion of Jesus does present a correct exhibition of these subjects, by ascertaining it to have been a supernatural communication from the Deity; but, as I grant that to obtain satisfaction in any way whatever upon the former point is the ultimate object, I state the question so as to admit of its being answered in any way in which it can be

shown that that ultimate object may, by reasonable men, be attained.

I deal with the question in this broad form, in which no one can object that any thing is assumed by way of gaining an advantage in the argument; — Does the religion of Jesus present a trustworthy exhibition of the religious relations, duty, and prospects of man? The believer and the infidel join issue on this point. The former affirms, the latter denies, the truth of the proposition submitted. It is a proposition, the truth or falsehood of which is to be determined by the consideration of evidence. I do not now say that it is to be determined by evidence of one kind or another, but by evidence.

And what is evidence? It is that, which in any case, makes the truth evident, or plain. It is that, which in proportion to its fulness and force answers curiosity, removes doubt, dispels error, silences objections, establishes conviction. What we look for, in respect to a question like that upon the truth of Christianity, is something distinct, substantial, and cogent enough, to confirm faith, to satisfy inquiry, and to convert unbelief. Wanting that, we may practise reserve; we may train ourselves to an incurious, unintelligent acquiescence; we may have conjectures, prepossessions, hopes; but evidence, and its consequent satisfaction of mind, we have not.

These remarks have brought us to a point where the distinction presents itself, which is commonly

made between the internal and external evidences of Christianity. I am alluding to no habit of thought recently introduced either among ourselves or elsewhere, when I say that the worth of the former has sometimes been extolled to the prejudice of the latter. Nothing can be further from my purpose, than to call in question the cogency of the internal evidences of our religion. On the contrary, in their proper place in the system of proof, I attach to them the utmost value. But, while we lay stress upon internal evidence, it is of the first consequence that we should know what it is that we appeal to under that name, and what we may safely appeal to it as proving.

"We wave the consideration," we say, "of the external evidences of Christianity, and prefer to rest our faith on the internal." If we say this intelligently, if we really have obtained satisfaction in this way, we are able to define our meaning. What is it? With some minds, it is likely that the phrase *internal evidence* stands for something exceedingly vague, — something to which, in a deliberate way of speaking, it will not do to give the name of *evidence*, with the accompaniment of any epithet whatever.

Does any one, when called upon to explain his alleged persuasion of the truth of Christianity, say that he has contemplated the excellence of that religion, and that he *feels* it to be true? This is a mere rhetorical statement. It may be the amiable expression of a warm heart, but it is not the per-

spicuous one of a clear understanding. Feeling is not, in its nature, cognizant of abstract truth, or of truth relating to any thing but sensible qualities. It is no more a fit umpire in respect to moral or historical truth, than in respect to mathematical. By feeling I may know an object to be hot or cold, to be hard or soft. Going beyond mere physical sensation, I may feel it to be sublime or beautiful, attractive or disgusting. To these qualities feeling may respond. These it acknowledges. But the truth of a maxim, or of a doctrine, I cannot in any proper use of the word be said to feel. I may see their truth ; but this is not sensation. It is intuition, a different act or posture of the mind.

It would be superfluous to press the argument against the verbal propriety of the assertion that any one *feels* Christianity to be true, any further than is necessary in order to present the caution against being deluded by an unmeaning phrase. It is used loosely and inexactly ; and what significance it has is so much the same with that of another expression employed in the same way, that, in what further I have to urge against the correctness of the views designed to be represented by both, it would be of no use to be at the pains of distinguishing them.

Another, then, tells me that he believes Christianity to be true, upon the ground of its internal evidence, and, when I ask him to exhibit to me that evidence, that I may believe with him, he replies that his meaning is, that the truth of Chris-

tianity, on a mere contemplation of it, commends itself to his judgment; that he *sees* it to be true, and that, if I will look at it, I shall see its truth as plainly as he does. No; I do not see Christianity to be true, independently of the presentation of some intermediate grounds of belief. I know what one means, who tells me that he is satisfied that such or such is the color or shape of an object, on the evidence of the bodily sense. I accept the testimony of that sense as conclusive, in relation to all to which from its nature it is able to testify. I acknowledge, too, that there is an intuition of the mind. But mental intuition, just as much as physical, has its proper province, beyond which it has no power whatever to inform the mind of any thing. Intuition cannot, from its nature, take cognizance of historical truth, nor of any portion whatever of abstract truth, except that portion which may be expressed in what, in the language of logic, are called *self-evident propositions*. Now the truths of Christianity are not such that the statement of them lies in self-evident propositions. On the contrary, as to its distinguishing doctrines, men every where, who have not received the religion, are ignorant of, or dispute, those doctrines, for the very reason that they are not self-evident. It belongs to the nature of a maxim, a self-evident proposition, that its opposite is an evident absurdity, a contradiction in terms. But this cannot be said, for instance, of the propositions which assert the paternal character of God, the immortality of man, a

state of future retribution. To deny those doctrines, is, as Christians believe, to state an untruth. But the denial of them is not the statement of a manifest absurdity; it does not involve the framing of a contradiction in terms. Suppose I undertake to affirm, that man has no life beyond the grave. You may feel confident in condemning the assertion as false; but you would not pretend to characterize it as self-evidently so; and, if not, then you cannot pretend that you know the contrary to be true by intuition.

You are satisfied, you say, of the truth of Christianity, on the ground of its internal evidence; and you explain yourself to mean by this, that, when it is presented to your consideration, you see or feel it to be true. Christianity here means one or the other of two things. Do you mean to say that you are satisfied by mere perception or feeling, that Jesus Christ came with a direct message to the world from its Maker? No. If he did so come, it is an historical fact, of which you cannot be assured by any sensations, nor directly by any perceptions, — that is, without their having something intermediate, — some testimony, — to act immediately upon. I need not urge this. Go to a person unacquainted with your faith, and tell him that eighteen centuries ago Jesus Christ came into the world with a divine communication; it is clear that he has no sensations or perceptions to convince him, on a mere statement of that proposition, that it expresses a truth. An occurrence, a fact, cannot

be proved to a person not a witness of it, by any internal signs; though under some conditions, it may be disproved. It is disproved, if the statement of it can be shown to involve a contradiction.

But this, I shall be told, is not what is meant. The substance of the religion of Jesus is the matter in question. It is the doctrines which Christianity contains, that are to be received as true on the ground of their internal evidence. And what is that evidence? It is to be seen, you reply, in their fitness and rectitude. They are to be believed, because they seem suitable and right. To you and me they do seem fit and right, in a high degree. But the question is upon them as representations of existing fact. The question is, Are they true? And for determining this, are their apparent suitableness and rectitude enough? Relating, as some of them do, to matters quite beyond the range of our experience, are we prepared to say, that their intrinsic, essential recommendations are such, as, independently of any proof of their having made the subject of a special divine message, bring them to our minds with the force of moral demonstration? If consciousness does not answer this question, experience and history will. Go to an infidel of the present day, and tell him that you are convinced of the truth of the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, for instance, because you see or feel it to be reasonable and true. He replies that he does not believe it, because he sees no such thing. And so your evidence fails, the

moment it is produced in the quarter where it is needed to do good. Between you and him whom evidence would serve, what you have to present is no evidence. The confident assertion on one part is met by a denial as confident, as broad, and, for aught that appears, if you cannot go beyond this representation, as reasonable, on the other. And your unprofitable conference breaks up just where it began. This is not the nature of evidence. Evidence leads to some comparison of thought. It stands upon a basis of admitted premises, recognised by those who look at it together. What is called *evidence* may be insufficient, and in a discussion of it its insufficiency may be exposed. When it is really all that it professes to be, it may encounter prejudice or passion, ignorance or dulness, and so fail to do its work. But to that which admits no parley beyond the bare statement of the opposite persuasions of two different minds, the name can with no propriety be given.

Nor can we defend the sufficiency of our internal evidence by saying, that it is the perverse and hostile state of the unbeliever's mind which prevents what convinces us from being good proof to him. No one of us is either a more sagacious or a more honest seeker after the truth in this matter, than were some of those ancient sages, to whom the internal evidence we speak of actually failed to give the satisfaction which they intensely longed to derive from it. If the doctrines of the Gospel carried their title to belief on their face, if conviction were

enforced by the mere contemplation of them, then, in respect to some of them, Plato and Cicero, Seneca and Plutarch, would have been as wise as we. They entertained, with an eager and solemn interest, questions which for us Christianity has settled. They turned the debated doctrines on all sides, searching inquisitively if plain signatures of truth could any where be found inscribed upon them. And with them the inquiry ended in a distressed acknowledgment of disappointment and ignorance. Are we in possession of more truth than they, by reason of being more clear-sighted and judicious? Who will say it? No; we know more than they did on the highest subjects of man's knowledge, because Jesus of Nazareth has told to us what was not told to them, and has accompanied his declarations with sufficient evidence, that in them he was delivering the message of God, who never can deceive.

Again; that is no evidence, which can be adduced equally in support of propositions contradictory to each other. We see or feel the doctrines of Christianity, we say, to be intrinsically worthy of acceptation, and therefore we hold them to be true. So too says the Hindoo of his religion; so says the Mohammedan; so says the fire-worshipper; so would say any devotee of a false faith, who had convictions, and cultivation enough of mind to analyze them. We should reply, that the perceptions or sensations of such a misbeliever were worthless, because they were but the indications of a distor-

tion of mind, the result of a vicious education. But, herein we should only be using an argument, which might with equal confidence be retorted upon ourselves. The evidence which is no more conclusive to one man for a truth, than it is to another man for an error, to yet another man for another error, and so on without limit, is not good evidence; at least, something better and less equivocal is wanted to confirm it.

"But Jesus, in one of his discourses, inquired, 'Why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?' Did he not here declare that his religion recommended itself sufficiently to adoption by its internal signatures of truth?" Did he so declare? Do the words express or imply any such specification? Is any thing said of one kind of evidence which was to influence and decide the right judgment spoken of, in distinction from any other kind? Not a syllable. Judgment takes cognizance of proof. He who is called upon to "judge what is right," is invited to make up a determination upon proper evidence submitted. Such evidence had been wanting before Jesus came, and accordingly men had judged wrong. He now had produced it, and, upon the basis of what he had produced, he called upon them to exercise a better judgment. His words do not particularize any one kind of proof, nor distinctly indicate that he had any one kind in view rather than others. But as far as there is any indication of the sort, it points to what we are in the habit of qualifying as *exter-*

nal evidence, — the argument of the context appearing to be this; You who profess to be so conversant with the signs that forebode to-morrow's weather, how is it that you fail to put the right interpretation upon the signs which accompany and proclaim my coming?

I have extended my remarks thus far upon the subject of what is called by some the *internal evidence* for Christianity, because, while I attach the utmost importance to what is rightly described by that name, I conceive that we take the most serious hazard of failing to give a reason, when occasion may require, of the hope that is in us, — of conducting unskilfully the argument with the unbeliever, and of becoming confused and distrustful as to the soundness of our own faith, — if, through a natural tendency to rate this kind of evidence highly, we attribute to it too much efficacy, or a different sort of efficacy from what in truth belongs to it. Some things it will prove perfectly, as I shall have occasion to endeavour to show. We should take care not to discredit it in the view of other inquirers, nor lose confidence in it ourselves, by insisting that it shall perform a part out of its province.

I am not now enumerating the parts of the argument, which do belong to its province. I am here only endeavouring to illustrate from it the point which I have in hand. We will suppose then, that a reader of the canonical books of the New Testament has become satisfied, by observation of their internal marks, (such, for instance, as are pointed

out in a portion of the Epistles, by Paley, in his "Horæ Paulinæ") that the books in question are genuine, — that they were composed by writers living in the first century, and under such circumstances as the writings themselves indicate. What then? By this judicious and profitable use of internal evidence, have we placed ourselves in a condition to dispense with the external? On the contrary, we have but reached it. We have but come where we can attend to it. We have but placed ourselves in a condition to have it address us. To illustrate from the language of the courts, we have only got so far as to be satisfied, that the voice we hear from the witness's stand is really the voice of the person who is said to be testifying. If we are to be satisfied concerning the facts alleged, it must be on the testimony of the witnesses who have thus far only been identified; and the evidence which they give is external evidence. — Further; their appearance of artlessness and frankness, and the fact that they do not impeach themselves by any contradictions, are weighty internal evidence. But evidence of what? Simply, that they mean to speak the truth. After all, their testimony, in which we are thus led to place confidence, — their testimony in relation to the facts which they allege, and concerning which we desire to be informed, — this, and nothing else, is what we have to rely upon, and this is clearly nothing but external evidence. — When the testimony is delivered, internal evidence still has a place. The suitableness of

the representations to the characters of the beings to whom they relate, whether man or God, is internal evidence, bearing upon the question of the claim which the representations have to reception. But, supposing it to be favorable, what does it prove? Simply that those representations may be true; that they are provable. Not a step further will it go. But what we want to know is, whether they *are* true. And to prove that they may be, falls very far short of proving that they are so.

These remarks have conducted us to a general answer to the question; If the internal evidences for our religion may not supersede the external, what place have they in the system of proof? The answer is, that the internal evidences do the three important offices, of preparing the way for the external, corroborating them, and in some instances supplying links in the demonstration, so as to form, by the junction of the two, a connected chain of proof.

These several uses of the internal evidence I shall have occasion to illustrate at different points, as I proceed with the argument. It is proper, however, that at this stage of it, having urged the claims of the external evidence, I should take some notice of a preliminary objection to it.

I believe I state the objection fairly as follows; "External evidence is historical evidence. But what capacity have the mass of men for the investigation of questions of history? How can they look into the proof, that the records of the gospel

history are genuine and authentic, and that Jesus Christ and his apostles did the deeds and spoke the words therein ascribed to them? Investigations capable of producing satisfaction on points such as these, are for scholars. But a great majority of men are not scholars. They are engaged in necessary secular occupations, and have no time for such inquiries. If they had time, very many have no taste, and very many no capacity, for study.

To this objection, which, it is manifest, proceeds upon the ground that confidence in others is not a reasonable principle of belief, I reply, first, that, if good against either, it is as good against the internal evidence, which, when the remark proceeds from a believer, is intended to be extolled, as against the external, which is disparaged. I take no risk in saying, that what is properly called internal evidence presents questions demanding for their perfect solution quite as much perspicacity and scholarship, — quite as much of all qualities and accomplishments which distinguish the intellectual and cultivated from the mass, — as any questions which occur in the examination of the external proof. If no evidence is valid except what can be directly presented with equal effect to the learned and the unlearned mind, what becomes of that important part of the internal evidence of Christianity, which arises from a comparison of the contents of its records with the opinions and customs of the time, and with the character and condition of their alleged authors? If it is required that this proof shall be

such as to be equally convincing to minds with and without comprehension and refinement, what is to be said of the worth of all that internal evidence, which has been thought to be furnished by the combination of excellences in the character of Jesus? Is the estimation of that character equally a work for all minds?

But in such particulars we see but a very small part of the case. Before a man can be satisfied of the truth of any thing by his personal investigations into its internal evidence, he must know from personal investigation what that is, which, by its internal evidence, convinces him; that is, when the question relates to the truth of Christianity, he must have ascertained what the system of Christianity comprehends and imports. But to ascertain this is a work for scholarship, quite as much as to maintain it when ascertained. How many men in any community, independently of all aid derived from others, are capable of debating and determining those questions relating to the meaning and nature of the system, without a determination of which they have no basis for those comparisons, by which the internal evidence spoken of is furnished? Again, apart from their confidence in the representations of others more learned, a vast majority of men in Christendom have not the slightest knowledge of the sense of those Greek words which exhibit the system, whose internal evidence it is alleged that they must pass upon by an action of their minds, independent of all reliance upon others.

Nor is this all. There are many good Christians who cannot so much as read. The very representation of the contents of the Christian system, which is provided in a version in their own language, is beyond their unaided examination. They must unavoidably place reliance upon others for the very elements of the information, on which an argument in the department of internal evidence may proceed.

Such facts show the impossibility of establishing a preference for the class of internal over that of external evidences, on the ground that the former and not the latter admit of a perfectly independent action of the inquirer's mind, such as dispenses with all reliance upon the attainments of others. But the truth is, the argument, from whatever source proceeding,— whether from the believer, who, hastily surveying the grounds of belief, would exalt one method of proof to the prejudice of another, or from the infidel, who would throw suspicion alike upon all,— loses sight of an important feature of man's condition. There is no reason whatever for supposing that Christianity, if designed to be received at all, was designed for reception upon any different principles of belief, from what create belief in other cases; and as to other cases of importance, nothing can be clearer than that it does not belong to the condition of humanity, to be limited, in respect to one's reasonable belief, to conclusions of which individual examination has furnished all the proof. We are conscious, in other things, of proceeding in conduct upon a basis of

reasonable judgments; but it is not upon judgments formed in this way, that in other things we commonly act. On how many subjects could any one say, that the belief he entertains is the result of thorough, independent investigation? I give up my health, and the health of those who are dearest to me, to the care of one, of whose science I know nothing from studies of my own. My all of earthly happiness depends upon the correctness of the treatment which he shall adopt; in other words, upon the correctness of the opinions which he has been led to entertain, and of which he is now to make an application. I know very little even of the structure of the frame on which he is to act, yet less of the virtue of his drugs, and less still of their adaptation to existing symptoms. What I do know is, that he is a man of intelligence and probity, — one who is capable, and has been desirous, of arriving at the truth, upon subjects which he has had suitable opportunities to examine; that his conclusions are similar to what others, with similar advantages, have reached; and that nothing is known to me, in respect to the nature of those conclusions, or otherwise, to render them improbable; and with this, I feel conscious of acting reasonably in adopting his conclusions as mine, in a case of the highest interest and responsibility. So I believe in the truth of the received theory of the solar system. So firmly am I convinced of it, that I hope I should go to the stake sooner than profess disbelief. But how am I

convinced of it? Is my persuasion the result of my own independent, thorough investigation of the subject? Could I produce a demonstration, the moment I should be challenged? On the contrary, I fear it would not require a very skilful disputant to perplex and silence me. My unhesitating belief upon this subject rests upon the same basis, as my belief upon many others. I believe what is declared, because they who have studied the subject profoundly, represent it as the result of their investigations, and because I know, on the one hand, that I have nothing to oppose to its truth, and, on the other hand, that whatever I have ascertained by individual inquiry, accords with and confirms it.

Such, as every one must own, are the established conditions of human belief, taking effect, for every man, in relation to a great portion of the subjects, at all remote from daily business and experience, on which he entertains belief. And the reasons why it should be ordained to be so, are not far to seek. Not only, if our persuasions should be limited to truths of which we had ourselves thoroughly examined the proof, would the circle of every man's opinions, and with it that of his preparation for action of any kind, be exceedingly narrow, but it is greatly for men's advantage, in their social relations, to be compelled to place this kind of confidence in each other. The feeling that it could not reasonably and safely be done would be unsocial, jealous, estranging. It is one of the strong ties by which God has bound me to others, that he has made me

understand, that I may have such reasonable reliance on their capacity, moral and intellectual, for investigations which it is not convenient for me thoroughly to pursue, as, joined to presumptions which I do myself see in favor of their results, shall justify me in receiving those results as well established. And, on the other hand, if circumstances admit of my devoting myself to the office of independent and elaborate inquiry, precisely what I need to dispose me to perform this office faithfully, is the knowledge that my results are to be not only for myself, but for others. The sense of responsibility thus excited, is precisely what it is most important should be felt by those whose circumstances admit of their pursuing such inquiries further than others; and, if they were inquiring only for themselves, of course it could not be felt. Let me appeal here to a perfectly familiar fact. When a man of repute for learning and intelligence advances some novelty of religious speculation, how often do we hear it said, that he ought to be more cautious; that he will disturb and unsettle the minds of others, who, when the truth of some one thing they have long believed is denied in such a quarter, will presently not know what they are to believe or disbelieve. What is this, but the most distinct acknowledgment, that, in fact, and to an important extent, men lean for their opinions on others whom they think they may trust; that there is an order of Providence, in other words, preventing the treasures of the mind from becoming a private property, making them a

common stock, the agreement of the wise and learned being actually a principle of belief to those who are less so. In short, what I am now urging is but one particular of the complex connexion, in which Providence, intending that men should be each other's benefactors, has bound them each to the rest. To say, that, in any case, a man must do everything for himself, or nothing will be done, is but to say that there others have no power to serve him; and this is but to take away, on the one hand, from that power of usefulness which is a great excellence of human nature, quite as much as is given, on the other, to that superiority to others' good offices, which is a far less one. The very reason why, in the universal arrangement of human affairs, men have been placed in different circumstances, and endowed with different capacities, is, that they may be in a condition to render and receive mutual benefits. There is no greater benefit than that of religious instruction; and, if it did not seem to belong to the necessity of the case, that some men should obtain it through a proper reliance on the representations of some others, still, to say that this mutual dependence was observed to exist in the instance under our notice, would be only to say that this was not found to present an anomaly in the otherwise universal system of divine administration.

Carefully weighing these considerations, we can find no reason to be surprised, that our Lord, in establishing his authority as a messenger from God

to communicate religious truth, appealed to proof of that kind, to which, in the histories of his life and ministry, we are told that he did appeal, — proof suitable, and intended, to be conveyed by the channel of external, historical testimony. I am hereafter to undertake to show that the truths of his religion, if they were to be brought into men's possession at all, needed to be conveyed to them through a direct revelation from God, and that the proper way of authenticating such a revelation was, by the exhibition of miraculous works, indicating an immediate divine interposition. Those miraculous works, direct evidence to the minds of those who saw them performed, would be equally good evidence to any others who could have sufficient assurance of their having been performed. But all who did not themselves see them wrought, — that is, most men of the then existing generation, and all men of later times, — would have to depend, for an assurance of their having been wrought, on the testimony of those who did see them. As long as the witnesses of them lived, this testimony might be given by them orally. After their decease, it could only be perpetuated by written accounts which they left behind. The books which they bequeathed to posterity, sending down in them their testimony to the facts which proved the revelation, might be expected to become, as we know that actually they have become, subjects of learned inquiry respecting their origin, their credibility, and their import. It is only by means of studious

investigation, that a man can become familiar with all particulars of the proof relating to these questions. But this does not prevent its being proper proof. The proof is there, for whoever will seek it; and if, from their individual circumstances, the majority of men are not in a condition to subject it for themselves to an exact scrutiny, this does not prevent their having reasonable grounds of faith concerning it. It only places them in respect to this in the same position which unavoidably they occupy in respect to other great subjects of human knowledge. In relation to a point which they have not had the best advantages of investigating for themselves, they act reasonably, and precisely as all men act in an infinity of other cases, when they acquiesce in the conclusions of others who have had such advantages; and the reasonableness and satisfaction of this course are increased, in proportion as their own knowledge, so far as it extends, affords presumptions in favor of those conclusions, and presents no grounds of objection to them.

I have alluded to the kind of evidence appealed to by Jesus and his apostles, in order to substantiate his claim to speak with authority as a messenger from God. Of course, I do not undertake to collect all the passages in the New Testament which bear upon this point; but some of them are the following. At the conclusion of the record of his first miracle at Cana, the remark of John is, that Jesus therein "manifested his glory, and his disciples believed on him." The Jews, though they

sometimes undertook to parry this evidence, well knew it in their hearts to be cogent; "We know," said Nicodemus, "that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him." "Many of the people believed on him," and the reason why they did is indicated in what follows; "they said, When the Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than this man hath done?" "What do we?" said the Pharisees after the revival of Lazarus, "for this man doth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him." At the feeding of the five thousand, "those men," we are told, "when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.'" "The works," said Jesus, "which the Father hath given me power to perform, those very works which I am doing, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me. Yes, the Father himself who sent me, hath been bearing witness of me." When he sent his apostles abroad to preach, he gave them, for evidence of their authority, "power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." So, when he gave his commission to the seventy, it was, "Into whatsoever city ye enter, heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, 'The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.'" When the impatient John, wondering that the Messiah, whose precursor he knew himself to be, should permit him still to lie in prison, sent

messengers with the reproachful inquiry, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" "in that same hour," we are told, he "cured many of their infirmities, and plagues, and of evil spirits, and unto many that were blind he gave sight; then Jesus answering, said unto them, "Go your way, tell John what things ye have seen and heard.'" When he upbraided Chorazin and Bethsaida "because they repented not," it was because their obduracy had been unmoved, when in them "his mighty works had been done." When the Jews, at the feast of dedication, urged him, if he were the Christ, to "tell them plainly," his reply was, "The works that I am doing in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. If I do the works of my Father, though ye believe not me, believe the works." "If I with the finger of God cast out demons," he argued on another occasion, "no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you." "The Father, that dwelleth in me, he doth the works." "Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake." "Many other signs," says John, at the close of his Gospel, "did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God." When the apostles, after his ascension, carried abroad his message, "the Lord," says Mark, "wrought with them, and confirmed the word with signs following." Peter, in his first discourse to his country-

men on the day of Pentecost, set forth his master's claims by speaking of him as "a man approved of God among them by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them;" and, when Peter and John were consigned to prison by the Jewish rulers on account of the impression produced by a miracle of their own, their prayer still was, "Lord, grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth their hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus."

The miraculous evidence of a supernatural commission, exhibited by our Lord and his apostles to their contemporaries, is to us, as it was to them, good evidence of what it was produced to prove, provided we can be satisfied that the alleged miracles were actually wrought. In arguing, as I have done this evening, that the mass of men, whose lives are occupied with active pursuits, may obtain reasonable satisfaction on this head, in part by availing themselves of the conclusions of such as have opportunity for more thorough inquiry, I have confined myself to the defence of a principle of belief, the soundness of which is without hesitation acknowledged in a variety of other applications. But the fact is, that the necessity of the generality of Christians depending, for their view of the external proof of their religion, on the testimony of a few persons devoted to literary research, is, as to its extent, apt to be very much overstated. It is chiefly

one point, in the system of Christian evidences, in regard to which this confidence requires to be reposed; in respect to which one sensible man needs to look to another for his facts. It is, the question respecting the genuineness and authenticity of the Christian records; a point of the first importance, no doubt, but not the one against which the assaults of unbelievers are oftenest directed. And, as to this, we shall have occasion by and by to see that there exists internal evidence of peculiar richness and force.

I have defended, this evening, the validity and fitness of that kind of proof to which our religion expressly appeals, and which, known in modern discussions by the name of *external evidence*, has been called in question, in respect to its competency to its assumed office. This evidence is, as to its subject, evidence to *miracles;* and another preliminary question has been raised respecting the essential credibility of relations of miraculous works. In the treatment of that question, and of yet one more, preparatory to exhibitions of the positive proof, it will be necessary for me, as it has been this evening, to hope for that patient attention which is due to the importance of the inquiry, and which I could not hope to win by any thing attractive in the manner of conducting it. I am aware that these preliminary discussions are of that abstract nature, that, so far from amusing the mind, they task it to a painful effort. But they are indispensable, if we would obtain a secure foundation

for an intelligent view of the asserted facts. In closing, I would say a few words upon the state of mind which we ought to aim to bring to the investigation now undertaken.

No reflecting man can fail to see that the question, whether Christianity is true, is the question in comparison with which any other that can be stated is of very insignificant importance. If we can obtain satisfaction that it is true, then we are satisfied that we have knowledge respecting all that it most concerns us to know, such as is yielded from no other source. If we have learned that we may rely upon its witness, then we have assurance that the Supreme Power of the universe is guided by a principle of infinite love; that our Maker is our Benefactor, that our Sovereign is our Father; that he who is able to protect against all endangering influences is watching over us perpetually with a tender providence; and that, accordingly, if we be but true to ourselves, nothing of real evil can ever be blended with our lot. We know that the existence on which we have entered here is but the beginning of an endless duration, which, if the work of this short life is well done, is to be an endless progress in goodness and happiness. What we know from Christianity of such truths, and others of infinite worth connected with them, we cannot know from any other teacher. The best and wisest men of antiquity were uninformed of them. They listened reverently to the monitions of nature; but for their most anxious inquiries

it had no response. If it be so, that we can trust to this religion as an instructer, then inexpressibly blessed are our eyes, for they see, and our ears, for they hear, those things which prophets and righteous men desired of old to see and hear, but desired it all in vain.

Such an inquiry of course deserves the best devotion of the best powers of the mind, exercised on such evidence as the individual mind, from its degree of culture and other circumstances, has within its reach. It deserves whatever can be done in the way of cool, cautious, discriminating, fair investigation. This all will be ready to acknowledge ; and yet in one particular the remark is perhaps subject to a misapprehension, leading to a practice adverse to its spirit. A discriminating, fair investigation is by no means a captious one, but its opposite. A fastidious, whimsical, distrustful use of our powers is but one form of abuse of them. If we would make them guide us to truth, we must really exercise them ; soberly, it is true ; but, because soberly, therefore energetically and manfully. We must not, through any distrust which we may please ourselves with calling modesty or circumspection, shrink from exercising them, or from adopting their conclusions when they have been exercised, nor task a fanciful invention in devising possibilities that might vitiate the evidence on which their decision has been made up. To judge fairly, we must not suffer the soundness of our minds to be tampered with, any more by timidity on the one hand, than

by over-confidence on the other. It is said,— and truly said, to a certain extent,— that we are apt too easily to assent to arguments in favor of what we desire should prove true. But, undoubtedly, there is also a perverse ingenuity,— indulged in by many minds, when they feel their interest in the issue to be great,— by which, in order, as they persuade themselves, to be perfectly guarded, they allow truth, when they have all but secured it, to slip away from their grasp. "Here, after all," they say, "is a possibility of something which would make a flaw in this argument, conclusive as it seems." Such a habit of mind prevailing would make mankind a community of universal skeptics; not skeptics in respect to religion only, but in respect to every thing but the objects of immediate perception, and the laws of quantities and lines. Heaven forbid that a man who allowed himself in such scrupulosity should ever be drawn to serve upon a jury; there would be small hope of obtaining justice at his hands. A society made up of such men would be a society which one could not endure to live in. If that judgment, which hour by hour instructs conscience and determines duty, may not be trusted in any case, except where no possible element can be imagined to exist, which, if known to exist, would reverse its decision, men must cease to look to their own judgments for the guidance of their conduct, and to the judgments of others for the security of their rights. In judgment, as well as in action, there is danger in cowardice, as well as in rashness. In

both alike, he that walketh firmly and uprightly, he it is that walketh surely.

As to the manner in which I have proposed to treat this argument, though some, whose opinions I hold in the highest esteem, have thought that I should conduct it most usefully, by giving great prominence to certain erroneous views upon the subject, which have recently been laid before this community, I have not seen reason to prefer such a course. I do not know that the views in question are likely to be regarded with favor, or to have importance attached to them of any kind, by any considerable portion of those whom I address. As far as they stand related to different parts of the evidence, an outline of which I am to submit, they will come up for consideration in their place. But in refraining from references of a temporary, and what might by possibility be construed to be of a personal nature, I have thought that I should avoid an inconvenient and unprofitable limitation of the argument, and adopt a course more serviceable to my hearers, and more accordant with the intentions of our Founder.

LECTURE II.

ON THE CREDIBILITY OF MIRACLES.

I CALLED attention, in part of my last lecture, to the fact that Jesus Christ and his apostles appealed to their miraculous works as proof of their commission to address men with a message from God. They did not undertake to show the truth of their disclosures by any process of demonstration. Parts of what they taught were as incapable of being proved by any abstract argument, as of being perceived by direct intuition. But what they taught, they took upon their veracity as divine messengers; and in proof of their veracity, in maintenance of their right to speak with authority, in evidence that they were intrusted by God to make revelations of his truth and will to men, they did works, manifestly of that nature that no man could do them except God were with him.

Nothing could be more decisive than this argument, and at the same time more level to the common, the universal understanding. We come, said

these men, to bring you instruction from the source of wisdom. We propound to you certain truths, of the utmost interest and importance, provided they are truths. We do not ask you to receive them on the evidence of feeling, or intuition, or demonstration. If they could have been felt or seen by human senses, if they could have been discovered or proved by human reason, they would not have remained to be discovered at this late day. We invite you to receive them upon the credit of the divine veracity. We call upon you to believe them, because God, who cannot err himself nor deceive others, is acquainting you with them through us. We tell you of them, not because your own unaided faculties can satisfy you of them, but because they cannot. If we have a commission to speak in God's name, of course we are entitled to implicit credit. That in fact we have it, we do not ask you to believe on our own assurance ; but in proof of it we do acts which can be no otherwise interpreted than as God's own confirmation of what we declare. With a touch or a word we restore the lame, we cure the sick, we give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, sanity to the maniac, life to the dead. These things are not in the order of nature. You well know that, within the range of natural operations, there is no power which can effect them. The agency which is adequate to such results is that of the Being who is above nature, who for reasons of his own wisdom and love instituted that order, and for like reasons can

invade and suspend it. When we speak, then, and such acts accompany our utterance, you must needs conclude it to be no other than God's own testimony, to which you are listening.

This being so, I submit that an untenable position would be taken by any, who should profess themselves believers in Christianity, but disbelievers in its miracles. The truth is, there is no more salient fact in Christianity than its own exhibition of itself as a miraculous communication. Whoever should conclude that Jesus and his apostles are not to be credited when they place it upon this ground, would have taken upon himself such an impeachment of their veracity, that he could have no reason for yielding them credit in any thing else which they alleged. Nor would it be possible to say that the miraculous relations in the Gospels might be so separated from the rest of the narrative, that authenticity might be attributed to the one and denied to the other. The truth is, the thread of miraculous history runs, in an indissoluble course of connexion, through the whole history. Very often, it furnishes the basis on which rest the relations of discourses and of other events. Throughout, the doctrine implies and points to a miraculous origin. The two together are the warp and the woof, which it is impossible to sunder, and not destroy the texture. I would not go so far as to deny, that he who professes a belief in Christianity, while he rejects this kind of evidence for it, may be a sincere believer. But I cannot hesitate to say that he is a

very inconsistent one, and that on reflection he must consent to hold his faith on a different ground if he would not be driven to abandon it.

But why this reluctance to receive the miraculous evidence in favor of Christianity? This brings us to the subject which I am to treat this evening; the antecedent credibility of miracles. Unbelievers contest the reasonableness of the persuasion that such acts ever were performed. And they contest this, not so often on the ground of any alleged flaw in the testimony which affirms them, as on the preliminary ground of a theory, that no human evidence whatever is competent to prove them; — that, by very reason of the acts alleged being of a miraculous character, there can be no testimony good enough to sustain the allegation of their occurrence.

It is, I repeat, this theoretical abstraction, which, more or less defined in different minds, but in many an ever present and operative prejudice, is, in these latter days, the strong-hold of infidelity. It is not so common for men to dispute the authenticity of the records of the revelation, or to question the fact that the testimony alleged for the miraculous agency exerted in its behalf, actually was given by persons competent, from situation and character, to give it; but they insist that it is more reasonable to reject testimony from any source, under any circumstances, than to believe those miraculous events, in proof of which the testimony in question is produced.

A remark which strikes us on the threshold of the examination is, that this theory, as it is with some,— this notion, though an operative one, as it is with others,— has no appearance of having a root in human nature ; it has nothing of that kind of confirmation which might be drawn from a common sense of men in all times. On the contrary, it seems to be no better than a vagary of our modern philosophy. For proof that the mind has no natural repulsion for events out of the course of nature, we have only to look at the early histories of any people. Accounts of portents, marvels, prodigies, results which no human force and which no known or supposable material agency brought to pass, abound in them. This is too notorious to admit of being illustrated ; and certainly the hosts of men, cultivated and uncultivated, who believed what old history reports, had no notion of incredibility being an attribute of the miraculous. Nor is such incredulity by any means the habit of the common mind at the present day. On the contrary, there prevails rather an appetite for accounts of what is out of the course of nature, and a readiness to receive them. There seems to be rather,— I will not call it an instinct, but a feeling,— which declares it a thing to be expected, that a higher power should sometimes interfere, in extraordinary methods, with the affairs of men. I am not, of course, justifying this feeling ; I am not saying that it is reasonable in any case, when carried beyond bounds where there are good reasons to sustain it. I am

but referring to it, in refuting the notion, that the opposite incredulity is so natural as to deserve consideration in a view of the ultimate laws of human belief. On the contrary, that incredulity is, I may not yet say, an unjustifiable, but an artificial thing. It is itself the product of a certain kind and degree of cultivation. The researches of physical science, conducted in recent times with wonderful success, have tended to manifest a regularity and method in the phenomena of the universe, bringing facts, hitherto anomalous, under the jurisdiction of what we call *Laws of Nature*,—that is, showing that the divine agency concerning them is exerted in ways not unconnected, but systematic and uniform; while, on the other hand, the experience of frequent deception, and the stricter rules of evidence which, in the improvement of social institutions and of the art of reasoning in general, have come to be applied, have led to a caution in the reception of testimony, which may very easily degenerate into an habitual, indefinite, and unreasonable distrust;—for all habits of mind which have reason for their basis, especially when they have the recommendation of novelty, and of having just been seen to be the means of sweeping away error, are in danger of soon losing their reasonable character by extravagance. A true philosopher stops in the conclusions which lie at the end of his chain of proof. A sciolist, in his haste, is apt to advance far beyond the point to which his proofs accompany him. And the circumspect wisdom which apportions belief to

evidence, giving to it all to which it is entitled and no more, is not more opposed to the credulity, which takes every assertion for truth, and welcomes the improbable and the monstrous, than it is to the credulity, which believes that all evidence may deceive, and which presumes to describe and define before-hand all possible methods of God's operation upon his world.

This prejudice against miraculous works, so strong with many as to indispose them even to consider the evidence in their behalf,—evidence which, if they could but be brought to weigh it, they would have no difficulty in owning to be sufficient, so that, could that prejudice but be removed, every obstacle to the reception of our faith would disappear with it,—this prejudice, I say, rests upon two grounds, which, though closely connected, have yet so much difference as to demand a separate consideration in the argument. He who believes that miracles are essentially impossible, of course will discredit the testimony which asserts them. But a man, who does not hold them to be impossible, may yet hold them to be incredible,—to be unworthy of credit, in the sense of being not provable. Because a thing may be done, it does not therefore follow that it may be proved to have been done. The two cases may not often be disjoined in point of fact; but the logical distinction is a perfectly intelligible one, and there is no difficulty in supposing actual examples of it. And thus the argument before us takes two aspects; one having reference to alleged

conditions of the divine character, the other to alleged conditions of human testimony. According to one, it is impossible to suppose that God will work miracles, because the supposition is inconsistent with right views of his character, and of his relation to his world. According to the other, it is unreasonable to believe upon testimony that God has wrought miracles, because, apart from any considerations of the possibility of his having done so, the thing is too improbable to be allowed by any man, except on better proof than those declarations of other men which have so often been known to deceive.

One form of the argument, then, runs thus; "For reasons regarding God, a miraculous agency is not to be supposed." Why not? Why is it inconceivable that God should work a miracle? If he will not, it must be for reasons of his own character. There can be no restraint upon God's agency, except what may be imposed by some attribute of his own; and these attributes are of two classes, the natural and the moral.

As to the first class, only a word needs be said. The only attribute of that class, which comes into view in the consideration of miracles, is Power,— that is, as it exists in God, *Omnipotence;* and so far from its presenting any contradiction to the supposition of miracles, it is precisely, as every one understands, by means of the divine power, that miracles are wrought, if wrought at all.

If it is impossible then to suppose that God will

work a miracle, it must be because such an agency of his is forbidden by one or more of his moral attributes. There is no other possible ground for the objection, if it is to stand. I have assumed hitherto that he with whom I am reasoning believes in a God; and it was better thus far to proceed upon that understanding, than to interrupt the course of remark by calling attention to the bearings of a belief in a God on our main subject. But, having arrived at the point where it is necessary to specify under what conditions, and to what minds, miracles are provable, I must allude, in a few words, to those doctrines of Natural Religion which provide a basis for the evidence in their behalf.

I own, then, at the outset, that a miracle, in any proper sense of the word, cannot be proved to an atheist. He who holds that there is no power above nature, of course holds that no act done in the universe can be done by a power above nature; and he cannot be addressed with the Christian evidence as long as his opinion on that point remains unchanged. If there is no supernatural Being, there can be no supernatural agency. Let me be satisfied that there is no God,—that all the changes which I have yet witnessed in nature are but the blind action of unintelligent matter,—and it is of no consequence what new and extraordinary operations may be presented to my view. The tombs in a church-yard might all give up their dead at my neighbour's bidding; he might stretch forth his hand, and the sun be quenched at noon; and

all I could say, if I still adhered to my theory, would be, that these were wayward, unintelligent movements of that material system, which to me was the universe.

The belief in miracles, then, I grant, requires a previous belief in the being of a God as its foundation. In other words, the evidences of Revealed Religion rest on a basis of Natural Religion. The fundamental doctrine of Natural Religion, namely, that there is an Almighty Creator and Sovereign of the universe, I shall here take for granted, because the proof of this belongs to a subject not assigned to me to discuss, provision having been made for it in another course of these lectures.* I shall take for granted the truth of what is affirmed alike by the common human understanding, and by the enlightened human understanding, except when self-subjected to a perversion, which is one of the anomalies of our nature, but which perhaps was necessary to excite to a duly sober and careful investigation of the subject. I shall assume, that the infinite marks of design manifest in the structure and administration of the universe, proclaim the universe to be the effect of an intelligent cause, the work of an infinite mind. And what I maintain is, that he who believes this, cannot reasonably, — cannot intelligently, — cannot, when he comes to define his views, — entertain the slightest prepossession against miracles, when alleged to have taken place under certain conditions and circumstances.

* See Appendix, B.

I ask attention to this statement, under the persuasion that it is perfectly unassailable. *If theism is true, miracles are credible.* If there is a power capable of working them, then it is supposable that, for sufficient reasons, they may be wrought. The atheist is consistent in denying their actual occurrence, beginning, as he does, with the denial of any power capable of such agency. The theist is utterly inconsistent with himself in such denial. Having agreed that there is a God, he has virtually agreed that there is an intelligence over the material universe, which, as it originally arranged that universe, and established the laws of its common administration, is of course capable of suspending or departing from them, and will do so whenever reasons similar to those which led to their institution, or other sufficient reasons, shall call for or justify such suspension or departure.

This point is of such decisive importance, that I must dwell upon it longer, at the risk of seeming to use undue repetition. You are no atheist. You have looked, you say, through Nature up to Nature's God. You believe that, apart from, and over, this vast and beautiful frame of things, is its infinitely powerful, wise, and good Creator and Sovereign. But you do not believe that he has made a direct revelation of himself through Jesus of Nazareth. That is, in popular language,—which of course I use in no wise invidiously, but simply to define with distinctness the position of him with whom I argue,—you are a Deist; which you have as

good a right to be, as I to be a Christian, if you can show as good reasons for your opinion, and a better right, if you can show better reasons. We do each other the justice to believe, that we are both equally honest seekers after the truth. If you have it, I would have it from you; if I have it, you would accept it with me. I receive the doctrine of Jesus as a message from that God in whom we both believe, and I prize it as the richest gift which he has bestowed upon me. You do not so receive it. You do not believe, that it came from that unseen Being in whom your faith is as strong as mine. I ask you, why you do not believe this. You reply, that, in defence of its claim, it appeals to the evidence of miraculous works, and that this is a kind of evidence which you cannot admit. To you, it is incredible that God ever will work miraculously. In other words, you cannot allow, that, in the administration of his world, he will, on any occasion, interrupt or vary his accustomed manner of administering his world. And here our issue is joined.

Now, I will not insist, that, in acknowledging a Creator, and yet denying the possibility of the agency contended for, you have already contradicted yourself;—that, when you have spoken of his framing this our world, you have yielded the point that he may sometimes act out of the order of common causes, because the framing of the world was itself an act out of the order of common causes, being in anticipation of them;—but I pro-

ceed at once to ask you to define the reason why you believe that he never will so act. What attribute of his forbids it? It is easy to give way to feelings, or prepossessions, or surmises of one or another kind. But it is not these with which we are now dealing. We are looking for reasons; and a man, who honestly believes that there is a God, before he sits down in the persuasion that that God will never communicate with men in an extraordinary manner, should see that he has met with some good reason for it.

While grounds of prejudice may be endless,—varying with the unexamined fancies, the loose, floating, disjointed thoughts of those who indulge it,—I am free to say, that I see no conceivable ground for the reason of which we are in search, except one should think that he found it in the divine attribute of Immutableness. But it is as impossible to find it there as elsewhere. To pretend that God's immutableness precludes him from any unusual, extraordinary exertions of his power, would be to adopt an utterly untenable interpretation of the word, such as the slightest consideration of the conditions of the case, or observation of the actual course of the divine agency, would be sufficient to expose. God is unchangeable, not in his agency, in which, on the contrary, nothing is more remarkable than its vast variety; but in his perfections, which are the spirit and principle of his agency. His methods of operation vary, for the very reason that his essential perfections cannot

vary. If the action of any being did not change with changing circumstances, adapting itself through some fixed, uniform spirit of action, to the diversified aspect of those circumstances, precisely the thing proved would be, that his principle of action was fluctuating. It is not in any such way that God acts. Unchangeably just, wise, and true he is; and because he is so, his dealings with men vary, to meet their varying conditions and characters. Is not his conduct, let me ask, constantly respective of existing states of things, and accommodated to them? The diligent he prospers, and depresses the idle; gives health to the temperate, and rebukes the dissolute with disease. So he deals with individuals, in what we call, as if it were something uniform, the order of his common providence, but what, in fact, is nothing but an ever-changing succession of adaptations of new treatment to new circumstances. And so equally he deals with nations and with the human race. All the history of man is but the record of the administration of a divine providence, varying its methods, because constant to its principles and designs.

When we maintain that God is unchangeable, the great truth announced is, that his perfections will never change, and that his methods of operation will never fail to be in accordance with them. Accordingly, to say that, because he is unchangeable, he will never work a miracle, would be only to say, that, because he is unchangeable, he will never do that which, under supposable circum-

stances, his unchangeableness itself may require. Because he is unchangeably good, he will work a miracle, whenever his creatures shall stand in need of some great benefit, which that is the appropriate way to confer upon them.

These remarks have brought us to the point of estimating the antecedent probability or improbability of miraculous operations. And, after what has been said, I feel authorized to affirm, that the question, whether the Divine Power ever will have recourse to such methods, is identical with the question, whether an occasion can ever arise for some great good to be conferred upon man, such as is incapable of being conferred in any other way. It is just as likely or unlikely, whichever any one may think it, that God will work a miracle, as it is that his creatures will need some great blessing, of a nature to be imparted by miraculous communication alone. Whenever that occasion shall arise, the same benevolence which dictated the institution of an order of nature, will dictate a departure from it. Just as much as, under common circumstances, there is reason to believe that that order will be observed, just so much, under such uncommon circumstances, is there reason to believe that it will be relinquished. For no intelligent theist can imagine, that there is any thing permanent or coercive in an order of nature, independent of the will of him who established it, or doubts that that will remains now a free and an intelligent will, as much as it ever

was. Why did God at first establish that order? Why does he maintain it? No significant answer can be given to this question, except that he established and maintains it from a benevolent regard to the good of his creatures. No one can doubt that it would be just as easy for God to make the sun *rise* upon our earth, as we call it, rarely, frequently, generally, as to make it rise, as he does, every morning. But then what would become of the endless calculations, movements, benefits, dependent on the regularity of that periodical phenomenon? He established this order, to the end that men might expect, might arrange, might promise, might provide, might reason, might educate their minds, which, without exercising their minds on something observed in the past, and looked for in the future, there would be no such thing as doing. I do not go too far in adding that he established this order also to the very end, that, by its rare violation, he might give such proof of his own direct intervention as nothing else would give. He established it for men's good; and because he established it for that object, he will, of course, in order to be consistent and immutable, depart from it, as often as that object can be better served by departure than by observance. God will not, as his creatures are apt to do, prefer the means to the end. Whatever infinite benevolence dictates, that he will be sure to do. If its objects will be best advanced by the maintenance of a regular course of operation, that course he

will maintain. Whenever, and as far as, they will be aided by its abandonment, its abandonment must needs follow.

I am doubtless understood to have been urging, in these remarks, not that supernatural divine agency is essentially credible under all circumstances, but that it is essentially credible in some. Of what nature those circumstances are, bringing the element of the divine benevolence into the question, I am hereafter more particularly to indicate, and to prove that they actually existed at the time of the introduction of Christianity. At present, I am only concerned with the theory. And I feel authorized to ask with confidence, whether, with a sincere and intelligent theist, the prejudice against the antecedent credibility of miracles must not be owned to be wholly out of place. The testimony produced for any specific occurrence of the kind may be insufficient; that is another question. The existence of the conditions under which they become credible may, in a given case, fail to be proved; that is another question. But the universal antecedent incredibility of them cannot, with any show of reason, be asserted by any one, who at the same time professes a belief that there is a good God. Give me but that doctrine, and miracles become to me just as credible as any other events. Let me know that God administers the world, and I have no longer a doubt, that whatever may belong to its right administration, that, ordinary or extraordinary, God will do. Show

me this condition of any alleged occurrence, and I freely own that it may have taken place as alleged. I am ready to listen to the evidence that it actually did take place. When I have listened, I may not be convinced; that will depend on another contingency; that will depend on my finding the evidence sufficient. But I begin with no aversion to it; produced under such conditions as have been now referred to, I am as ready to attend to it, and to yield to it, if it do prove sufficient, as if it were produced for some common event. The previous conditions existing, I hold myself as ready to be satisfied by testimony of the reality of a miracle, as of an earthquake, for instance, or of a fall of rain.

I have argued thus far against the notion of an essential antecedent incredibility in miraculous works. I proceed to the other view, which has been referred to, as indisposing some minds to the consideration of all testimony offered in proof of their actual occurrence. The question no longer is, whether they may be done; but, supposing they may be done, can they be *proved* to be done? Can we, who did not see them, be made to know that they have been done? It is contrary to experience, it is said, that a miracle should be wrought, but it is not contrary to experience that testimony should deceive; the trustworthiness of the latter, therefore, cannot be relied upon by a reasonable man to establish the reality of the former. It is a contest between two opposite improbabilities, of

which the less ought to give way to the greater, and, as it is less improbable that there should be some flaw in the testimony (a fact which experience warrants), than that supernatural acts should be done (an assumption which experience condemns), it follows, that all testimony which is brought in proof of such acts, may safely be dismissed without examination. This is the famous argument of Hume, in his "Essay on Miracles." Let us look separately at the two parts of the statement.

Miracles are supposed facts, it is said, of a nature contrary to experience. Contrary to whose experience? To yours and mine? To that of a part, or of a majority, or of a great majority of mankind? Of course they are; else they would not be miracles. If they were of frequent occurrence,—if they were not foreign to the observation of a great majority of men,—they would belong to the order of nature; they would not be deviations from it; and, in ceasing to be deviations from it, they would be spoiled of all their power to betoken the special intervention of the Deity.

But let us understand the stress of this objection. Do you mean to refuse credit to every thing that has not fallen under the observation of a considerable portion of mankind? Then of course you feel bound to deny that there is such a place as Lord North's Island, or such an animal as the ornithorynchus; for an exceedingly small number of persons have ever seen the one or the other. You

will not say this; but, in forbearing to say it, you relinquish your ground of rejecting what does not fall within common experience.

Will you say, then, that the alleged facts which you mean to reject, as unsusceptible of evidence, are not merely such as have been hitherto unknown,—these, you allow, may be made known by testimony,—but such as fall within no known analogy in nature? But some of the most notorious and unquestionable facts,—the phenomena of galvanism, of the winds, of the aurora borealis,—are of this description. It is true that there is a wide difference between them and miraculous occurrences. In respect to the former, we see no reason to doubt, that, had we but sufficient knowledge, we should be able to perceive that they do fall within the analogies of nature, that they are within the jurisdiction of the laws of the rest of the visible universe; while the whole aspect of the latter forbids such a supposition concerning them. But suppose it were different with the former,—suppose we could, in any way, be sure that they contradicted every analogy, that they were hopelessly anomalous,—still, as facts, we should be under the unavoidable necessity of receiving them. No one could possibly hesitate to admit their reality, whether he could make any thing of them in a system of Natural Philosophy or not.

To say, then, that miracles are alleged facts contrary to general experience, is to predicate nothing of them, but what is equally true of a great many

other things, perfectly well known, and universally acknowledged. The only thing which it would be here to the purpose to say would be, that miracles are contrary to universal experience. But this is the very thing at issue. To say that the testimony to the Christian miracles must not be received, because miracles are contrary to universal experience, is a mere begging of the question. It is simply to affirm, that the Christian miracles never were wrought, by way of proving that they never were wrought; for, if they were wrought, then certainly there is not a *universal* experience against miracles. But, independently of this, the Christian believer would reply; "I do not allow so much as that the Christian miracles stand alone in history. I understand Judaism also to be a supernatural divine communication. I have a two-fold answer, therefore, to make to the objection. If I understood the Christian miracles to be absolutely unparalleled, I could not for that reason refuse to credit them; for every thing must have its first time, and with many things the first time is the last. But I do not understand this of them. On the contrary, I believe that the people to whom they were exhibited by Jesus and his apostles, had precedents for them in their own annals."

Yet another remark is called for by this popular, but utterly fallacious objection. Experience, it is said, creates an insurmountable objection against miracles. But what is experience good for, as affording a presumption for or against alleged facts,

except it have regard to a similarity of circumstances, attending, on the one hand, facts vouched by experience, and, on the other hand, facts now first alleged to have taken place? If, in a certain climate, I should say, that I believed there would presently be a shower, and you should reply, that the thing could not be, because in a long experience you had never known it rain at that hour, I should dissipate at once all your reasoning from experience, if I could point you to a threatening cloud in the sky, the like of which, at that hour, you had also never before seen. You tell me you have never known it rain at the time of the day or year, at which we are conversing, and therefore you are satisfied it will not rain now. I ask you, Did you ever before see the sky overcast at that time, as you now do? When you admit that you never did, then I bar your inference with the homely argument, that circumstances alter cases. Your past experience of the actual result from one state of things, has no validity to determine the probable result from another state of things. You might not have expected that different state of things to occur; but, inasmuch as you see it to have occurred, your ground for an argument from experience is removed from beneath you. So, when you say, that the experience of the world is against miracles such as are alleged in proof of Christianity, you say nothing unless you can further show, that, at some other time, there have existed circumstances essentially the same with those under which Christianity

was first preached. To do any thing in the way of the argument you have undertaken, you must make it appear that the same causes have never been known to be followed by this effect; it is merely irrelevant to say, that the effect has never been known to follow from different causes. A presumption of what may take place under one set of conditions, can by no means be gathered from the experience of what has taken place under a different set of conditions. Can it be shown, then, that, at some other time, the same circumstances have existed as those under which Christianity was revealed? Can it be shown, that, at some other time, there was the same fitness in, the same call for, a miraculous intervention, which call however was not met? When it can, there will be some ground for this alleged presumption from experience against miracles to stand upon; and until it can, there will be none.

I have thus far considered one branch of the proposition; namely, that the voice of experience is against the reality of miracles. The other is, that the voice of experience is not against the deceitfulness of testimony. The feebleness (should I do wrong to say, the disingenuousness?) of this statement, has not, that I know of, been particularly exposed. No Christian would pretend, that all testimony is credible. No one would say, that every thing that may call itself testimony is strong enough to establish miracles, or strong enough to establish any thing else. When appeal is made to

experience to decide upon the sufficiency of testimony in a given case, the question is, Has *such* testimony as is actually produced in that case, been experienced, in other cases, to deceive? I accept here with cordial readiness, Hume's own statement, made in one passage of his "Essay."* This is what he says, and he states it with some preface and formality, as if it were something decisive for his view of the question. "'T is a general maxim worthy of our attention, that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact which it endeavours to establish."—"When any one tells me," he continues in the same paragraph, "that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself whether it be more probable, that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates, should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other, and according to the superiority, which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle. If the falsehood of his testimony would be more miraculous than the event which he relates, then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief or opinion."

Nothing can be more justly said than this. As a friend to Christianity, I adopt every word of it. I would make my inference from the proof alleged for

* *Essays*, &c., Vol. II. p. 121.

Christianity, upon this principle, just as, upon this principle, I would pass upon a litigated question, when serving under oath upon a jury. The principle is by no means peculiar to miracles. It belongs to the universal laws of human belief. Every question arising upon testimony, relates to a conflict between opposite probabilities, and is a question to be determined by reason. The question is, whether of the two is most likely,—that the testimony in the given case is false, or that the fact alleged by the testimony is true. The testimony itself is a fact. It is given; we have it; there it is; we cannot wink it out of sight; in some way we must dispose of, we must account for it. It must have had an origin, a cause. It must have had its origin in one or another of three sources; we can conceive of none besides. It may, in the first place, be false; it may be uttered by a deceiver; its origin in *imposture* is one possible explanation of it. It may, again, have been uttered honestly, but under delusion; it may truly represent the persuasion of him who delivers it, but that persuasion may be ill-founded; its origin in *error*, then, is a second possible explanation. Once more; the testimony may represent persuasions honestly entertained, and also well founded. This is the only possible remaining explanation, and when we are satisfied of the integrity of the witness, and of his capacity and good opportunities for observing what he undertakes to relate, this is the explanation that we cannot help adopting;—which is but to say, in other words,

that, when those conditions are met, we cannot help accepting what the witness has asserted as the truth. I adopt the form of statement which I just now quoted as correct; and it is simply because, having looked at the circumstances of the case, I find that either the falsehood or the error of the witnesses to the miracles of Christianity is a thing more unlikely,—that it would be a greater miracle,—than the occurrence of those miracles themselves, that I believe the miracles to have occurred, agreeably to their representation.

I have said that every question upon evidence is a question between opposite probabilities, presenting an alternative, and requiring a selection and decision to be made by common sense, or by a process of reasoning. It has been said of testimony, that it proves nothing but "the state of another's mind in regard to a given fact."* But not so much as that does it prove, for it may be disingenuous. Nothing, whatever, does it show in the first instance, except the purpose of the witness to convey a certain representation to another mind. That purpose, so evinced, then stands a thing to be accounted for. It may be a dishonest purpose,—that of a man who knows the truth, but means to hide it, or who does not know all he pretends to know. It may be an honest, but an unenlightened purpose,—that of a man who means to tell his persuasion, but whose persuasion, from some negli-

* Channing's *Dudleian Lecture;* Works. Vol. III. p. 117.

gence or infelicity, has been causelessly taken up. It may be, thirdly, the persuasion of one who both knows the truth, and means to impart it. *Which* it is, in any given case, is a question to be determined by him to whom the naked fact of the given testimony is submitted. He is to consider and decide, between the solutions which have been referred to, which is the most probable, and is to be preferred; and that which he sees cause to select, in this method of proceeding, to him then represents the truth.

I have said that every judgment upon testimony involves a conflict between opposing probabilities. I might phrase it more strongly. Most of what testimony undertakes to prove, is, strictly speaking, improbable, till testimony has put a different face upon it. Not the most common fact can be named, to which the quality of antecedent improbability does not, in a just sense of the language, attach; not one, which, considered in relation to the infinity of other possible facts that might come in its place, is not unlikely till it has occurred. Ask any one versed in the doctrine of chances, or make the appeal to common sense, and learn whether this is not true. We see no reason, for instance, why a die, when thrown out of a box, should not have any one of its six faces uppermost as well as another; if your neighbour tells you that it has actually exhibited some one face when so thrown, you readily take it on his unsupported word; yet that, beforehand, the chances were strongly

against its exhibiting that particular face, is too plain for any words to make it plainer. Should he tell you that three times, or five times, successively, it had actually exhibited that face, you would not be very incredulous; but, beforehand, you would not hesitate to make a great pledge against the chance of its doing so. I am using no sophism here. I am not at all pretending, that, beforehand, one thing is as likely as another. But I am urging that this quality of antecedent improbability must not be to us the bugbear that some would make it. It attaches to those things which, whenever alleged to have actually occurred, we are in the habit of most readily believing to have occurred. It attaches to facts to which we are in the habit of assenting, and reasonably assenting, on the lowest degrees of testimony. I am by no means keeping out of view the fact, that a peculiar degree of antecedent improbability belongs to miraculous occurrences, as such. On the contrary, all my remarks, in the early part of this lecture, went to ascertain the conditions and the measure of that improbability. But, if one measure of it may be overborne by a sufficiency of positive evidence, so may another; so may all, until the degree of improbability becomes so strong as to overbear the opposite improbability of the testimony alleged being founded in dishonesty or error.

And this question, — a question of the same kind with those which constantly come before, and are determined by, every man, in the common

concerns of life,—is precisely that which must be entertained and adjudged by him who considers the evidences of Christianity. He must look at the question on both its sides. Here, on the one hand, is the testimony. Is it, he must ask, or is it not, probable,—is it highly probable,—is it, all the circumstances considered, unquestionable, to a reasonable view,—that they who gave it were honest men, and, as to the matter in hand, well informed, neither deceived themselves, nor willing to cheat others? Here come up the questions relating to the characters of the first preachers of our religion, and the circumstances and motives under which they proclaimed it. There, on the other hand, are the facts alleged by them. What is the character of those facts in relation to the evidence produced to establish them? There may be that in an alleged fact, which of itself at once silences all testimony. It would be idle to heed an assertion, however solemnly made, which involves a contradiction in terms; for a contradiction in terms expresses an impossibility in fact, or,—which perhaps is a better description,—it expresses a nullity, it is no expression. In an alleged fact, there may be improbability, not of a very high degree, but yet sufficient to overbalance weak evidence. There may be essential improbability of a high degree, sufficient to overpower evidence of a seemingly weighty character. The question is, How is it in the present instance? And, in settling it, we

cannot be put off with any general and superficial statement, that testimony has often deceived, and that miracles have not often happened. Our inquiry is respecting this particular testimony on the one part, and these alleged miracles on the other. The testimony being what we find it to be, is it competent, — has it a right, — to enforce belief in the specific events alleged by it? You tell me that you think miracles are events unlikely to happen. I agree with you. I think so too, considering them abstractly, apart from their supposable causes and alleged concomitants. But I am not at liberty so to consider them in such an argument as that now in hand. The Christian miracles being alleged as facts, I must entertain the question upon them as facts, in connexion with their actual adjuncts. And, when I find them and their reasons and circumstances to be such, that it was worthy of the divine perfections to perform them, then I find any peculiar antecedent improbability that God would perform them to be either greatly diminished or entirely done away; — then, to my mind, their alleged essential unsusceptibility or difficulty of being proved is either extremely reduced, or has altogether disappeared; — then the way is cleared for the testimony to do its office. And, that testimony being what it is, I find the improbability to be thrown far on the other side. It is immeasurably more unlikely to me, that such testimony should be untrue, than that the events, which it alleges, actually befell.

If it would not be giving an undue degree of prominence in this discussion to that argument in the Essay of Hume, to which I have referred, it would be worth while to go over it with some detail, with a view to show how much of its plausibility it owes to the ground being shifted in different parts of it. But one observation further upon it demands to be made. "I beg," says its celebrated author, "the limitations here made may be remarked, when I say, that a miracle can never be proved, so as to be the foundation of a system of religion. For I own, that, otherwise, there may possibly be miracles, or violations of the usual course of nature, of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony." If it be granted to be possible that miracles should be performed and be proved, why this exception in respect to them, when alleged as "the foundation of a system of religion"? The answer to this question follows. "Should this miracle," says the writer, "be ascribed to any new system of religion, men, in all ages, have been so much imposed on by ridiculous stories of that kind, that this very circumstance would be a full proof of a cheat, and sufficient, with all men of sense, not only to make them reject the fact, but even reject it without further examination."*

Now I ask whether there is any thing in this distinction. I ask whether, on the contrary, it would be possible for men of sense, upon any

* *Essays*, &c., ubi supra, pp. 134, 135.

such ground, to adopt any such mode of procedure. A thing is in itself abstractly provable; this is granted; but, when attempted to be proved in order to give confirmation to something else, not in itself incredible, then it is said to be no longer provable. And why? Because, in that connexion, for that purpose, we know that the method of proof in question has often been attempted, and has failed. Let us try this principle by another example. In criminal trials, no method of proof is oftener resorted to in defence, than the proof of an *alibi*. Nothing can be more certain than a man's innocence of an act alleged to have been done at a certain time and place, provided he can show, that, at that time, he was in some other place. The argument is so conclusive, if sustained in point of fact, that it is very often resorted to, and very often fails for want of being sustained in point of fact. Suppose that it had always failed, as often as attempted, within our knowledge; what then? Would the fact that a man was in one place, when charged with being in another, be any less provable? Would it become any thing else than what it was before, a fact, the easiest and simplest possible to be established by testimony, provided only there was testimony enough? There can be only one answer to this question. And, further, for the frequency of resort to this proof has no little cogency the other way; why is it that an *alibi* is so often pleaded in the courts, when the pretence

is a false one, and so the evidence for it falls short? What does this show? It shows, that, according to the common sense of mankind, it is proof, when it can be made out, peculiarly conclusive in its nature. So in the case of miracles. The very reason why the authors of false religions have appealed to pretended miracles in their support, is, that they felt, and they knew that other men would feel, that real miracles are the proper proof of a true religion. The knowledge, that so many attempts at deception in this way have been made, should no doubt put us on our guard. It should make us extremely cautious in examining such pretensions. But nothing could be more unreasonable than to conclude, that, because they have been often made without foundation, therefore they can never be made with it. What has been shown, on the contrary, is, that, according to the common sense of mankind, the proof pretended may be truly adduced, and that, when truly adduced, it is the proper proof to authenticate a new revelation. That there have been many counterfeits, by no means proves that there is nothing genuine. It proves, on the contrary, that there is something to be counterfeited, and, moreover, that it is something worth counterfeiting.

In the first part of my remarks this evening, it was my purpose to show, that one thing is necessary, and only one, to make miraculous events credible, — to bring them within the range of testimony; and that is, that the circumstances under

which they are alleged to have been wrought, — the condition of humanity at the time of their occurrence, — shall be seen to be such as to make it accordant with the divine perfections that they should be wrought. Because God is almighty, he can establish, and he can depart from, a uniform order of operation. Because he is benevolent, he has, in this part of his universe, established such an order for men's good ; an order, from which, and for the same reason, he will not often depart. But, also, because he is benevolent, he will depart from it, when there is a sufficiently important benefit which they need to have conferred upon them, and which miraculous acts are the appropriate instrumentality in conferring. The proof that this condition was actually met at the time when Christianity was introduced, and that accordingly a miraculous intervention was then credible, and is credible now as having then taken place, is to be the subject of my next Lecture.

LECTURE III.

NEED AND SEASONABLENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

I ENDEAVOURED, in my last Lecture, to establish the point, that a fair and full impression of testimony produced to substantiate an actual occurrence of miraculous events, ought not to be obstructed by any prejudice against miracles, as if they were antecedently incredible, or so much as antecedently improbable, under circumstances such as may be supposed, and such as, I am now to proceed to show, actually existed at the era of the introduction of Christianity.

In conducting this argument, I have understood myself to be dealing with reasonable men. If any one undertakes to enforce the prejudice in question, by connecting with the alleged miracles of Christianity any trifling association confounding them with idle prodigies falsely pretended at one or another time, or by applying to them any con-

temptuous appellation, there is nothing for a reasonable man to do in relation to him, except to lament that he is as much wanting in good taste, as in good sense. A miracle may, or may not, have been performed; but no man must attempt to degrade in my eyes the agency which goes by that name; for, if truly alleged, nothing else can be so sublime. The Supreme Power of the universe has always been present with his creatures. But he has been present with them silent and unseen. Now he bursts through the darkness. He comes out of the clouds and shadows that have enveloped him. He acts, as he has not acted at other times, before their sight. The idea can be invested, in a right mind, with no associations but those of the most imposing and awe-inspiring character.

The argument, I repeat it, is understood to be addressed to reasonable men. And by this I mean not men reasonable on some or many other subjects, but men willing to listen to reason in general, and on this subject as well as others. I have no idea that any particular cultivation, or even so much as any uncommon fairness, is necessary to prepare a person to give a favorable attention to the miraculous evidence produced for Christianity. On the contrary, I am persuaded that the common understanding has no prejudice whatever against that sort of proof. But there is a perverse discipline of the mind creating a repugnance to such proof, independent of the training of a false

philosophy. There are some men, acute and judicious in the management of their common affairs, who, for the very cause that makes them so, are all the less judicious in determining any abstract question. They are the dupes of the experience which they idolize. They give in to a practical sophistry, disinclining them to credit what their individual observation does not warrant. This is a narrowness peculiarly liable to affect the mental operations of men, whose minds have had an intense action in some one confined sphere, which has given them importance and conciliated to them confidence, and whose merely hasty and thoughtless judgments, therefore, appear to have some title to be quoted as of particular account on some other subject, to which they have given no attention.

But, fortunately, the number of such persons is not very large in proportion to the whole. Men wiser than they on all subjects, and men less wise on some, for the most part agree in being unaffected by the fallacy which blinds them. To have risen, either with or without other knowledge, to some settled and clear notion of a First Cause of all created things,—this is the needful, and this is the adequate, preparation for a reception of the proof of Christianity presented in its miracles. That notion is very generally entertained. Atheism is the rare result of the aberrations of a few anomalously framed, or cruelly abused understandings. A searching philosophy infers the existence of God,

with enlightened confidence, from the works of the universe; and an uncorrupted common sense of common men holds fast to the same conviction. From that conviction,—not professed, but really entertained,—distinct and familiar to the mind,—there is but one easy step to a candid and favorable consideration of the Christian miracles. The Being, who made and sustains the universe, is all-powerful; he may do what he will. He is all-merciful; he will do whatever the good of his creatures may require, whether that resemble his previous forms of agency or not. He is a moral agent. He is no formalist. In relation to his creatures, he has acted hitherto in certain ways, because hitherto it has been best for his creatures that he should so act. He will manifest himself differently, whenever, by such change of administration, their benefit can be best promoted. So clear do I esteem it, that the probability of a miraculous revelation is involved in the doctrine of theism, that, marvellous absurdity as atheism appears to me, I should yet regard it as a far less promising undertaking to prove the being of God to a person who had so abused his mind as to deny it, than to satisfy a believer in it of the reality of the Christian miracles, whatever aversion to them he might have causelessly taken up. There is a far wider chasm, and harder to pass, between atheism and the belief of a God, than between the belief of a God, and the belief that he has made a supernatural revelation in Christianity.

Miracles, being possible to the power of God, will be performed or not performed, according as his benevolence shall dictate. Hence they are credible to men or not, according as men see or do not see reasons, suitable to engage the divine benevolence to perform them. This is the point, already illustrated, from which we start this evening; and the object of the present lecture is to show, that, at the time of the introduction of Christianity, such reasons actually existed. And this proposition I am to illustrate in the three following particulars, which obviously cover the whole ground of the argument; 1. A special revelation of religious truth was then needed; 2. It was seasonable, so that, if made, it would not be made in vain; 3. The system of religious truth contained in Christianity was suitable to meet the existing need. Under each of these propositions there is room for a wide range of observation and statement; but here, as in other parts of the discussion, I must limit myself to some principal heads of remark.

I say then, first, that, at the time of the introduction of Christianity, occasion actually existed for a special divine revelation, because there was then important religious truth not possessed by men, and which, as far as can be seen, they could not come to possess except through such a revelation.

The condition and opinions of the civilized nations of the world at the time of the introduction of

Christianity are better known to us than any other portion of ancient history, so that we can be in no danger of mistake upon this point. We have abundance of books, which reveal to us the actual state of mind, in respect to religious opinion, of the common people on the one part, and of the philosophers on the other. We see that the ostensible prevalent belief was a very gross form of polytheism. The gods and goddesses of the classical mythology are perfectly well known to us, and we perfectly well know that their attributed characters were such that they were no proper objects of religious reverence; that they could not be objects of reverence, except to deplorably perverted minds; and that, as far as they were reverenced, their influence on the minds of their worshippers must have been merely depraving. The conception of them was simply that of beings superior to mortals in power, knowledge, and duration of life, but, beyond the measure of human infirmity, slaves of the most brutal impulses,—of the fiercest passions, and the vilest lusts. Had they been men instead of gods, they would have been such pests as no human society could tolerate. The Roman writer, Varro, contemporary with the fall of the Republic, does not hesitate to say, "All things are attributed to the gods, which not only seem suitable to men, but to men of the vilest character." *

* "In eo [the popular theology] sunt multa contra dignitatem et naturam immortalium ficta. . . . . Omnia diis attribuuntur, quæ non modo in hominem, sed etiam quæ in contemptissimum hominem, cadere

Thus the sentiment of religious reverence, naturally the most exalting principle in the human constitution, was not merely deprived of its proper object, but, as far as it was not crushed, was made the instrument of wrenching and degrading the whole moral nature.

Where, as was true to a great extent, even this kind of reverence for something supernatural had died out, it had been supplanted by nothing better than a sensual, stolid atheism, or a scoffing universal skepticism, which, refusing to affirm or deny any thing, only questioned, derided, and grovelled. If the belief of the philosophers embraced less that was absurd and corrupting than that of the populace, it scarcely embraced any thing more satisfactory. Materialism and fate, and the Epicurean doctrine of a Deity, who, devoted to his own ease and pleasure, extended no providence over his creatures, — these, for a general statement, were the schemes, which, with the wisest, stood in the place of religion. And as to the great practical doctrine of religion, — that of a just retribution in a future life, inspiring the hope of endless happiness to encourage the toils of virtue, and deterring from wickedness by the one sufficient motive, the fear of its tremendous consequences, — of this it cannot

possunt." Augustine *de Civitate Dei*, Lib. vi. cap. 5. (Tom. V. p. 346. edit. Basil.) For a full sketch of Varro's account of the theology of his time, under the three heads of the mythical (or poetical), the physical (or philosophical), and the civil (or religion of the State), as contained in his forty-one books of *Antiquities*, and his book *On the Nature of the Gods*, now lost, see the sixth and seventh books of Augustine *de Civitate Dei*.

be pretended that there existed any belief, of a nature to give it the smallest efficacy. The very doctrine of a future life, — stated and discussed from time to time, as were all other possibilities pertaining to the great problem of man's existence, — can be no better characterized, as it existed in antiquity, than in the words which Paley has applied to it. "It was one guess among many." There was no sufficient evidence for it, and they, who most hoped it might be true, could not pretend to any persuasion of its truth. By some of the sects, as the Cynics and the Epicureans, it was positively denied. The several schools of skeptics could, in consistency with their name and fundamental profession, have no fixed opinion concerning it. The Stoics were divided upon it; so were the Peripatetics; and what was on the whole the judgment of the great master of the latter sect, — the head of the human race, perhaps, in respect to intellectual vigor, — whose unaided resources would have done all towards such a discovery that human resources unaided could do, — is to this day a matter of dispute, as it could not possibly be, if he had entertained any decided opinion. When Cicero, in his "Tusculan Questions," undertook to speculate upon it, he said that it was "condemned by crowds of dissentients," and these, he adds, "not only among the Epicureans, but, I know not how it is, all the most learned men hold it in contempt;" * and Seneca, substantially to the same

* *Tusc. Quæst.*, Lib. i. § 31. Opp. Tom. XV. p. 47 (edit. Boston. Nov-Ang.)

effect declares; "About the soul there are innumerable questions; whence it comes, what is its nature, when it begins to be, how long it endures, whether it passes from one place to another, and changes its dwelling, whether it is transferred to the forms of different animals, whether it goes through its servitude only once, and then, when liberated, wanders through space," &c.*

The Pythagorean doctrine of immortality, if it may be so called, was not that doctrine in any true or profitable form; it only alleged a loss of individuality at death, and resumption into the soul of the universe, — a scheme obviously inconsistent with the idea of any retribution. The ancients who are commonly selected as presenting the strongest instances of an approach to the truth upon this subject, are Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch. But Socrates, according to Plato's representation of his opinions, which is the authority on this subject, though he professed a hope for himself of being transferred at death to the society of the gods, and of good and wise men,† confined this expectation to the few who like himself had been devoted to the study of philosophy; ‡ and he had no higher view of the destiny of common men, meritorious or otherwise, than that at death the surviving part of them should be transferred to the bodies

* "Innumerabiles quæstiones sunt de animo tantum; unde sit; qualis sit; quando esse incipiat; quamdiu sit; an aliunde aliò transeat, et domicilium mutet, ad alias animalium formas aliasque conjectus; an non ampliùs quam semel serviat, et emissus vagetur in toto;" etc. — L. Ann. Senec. *Epist.* 88.

† *Phædo.* Platonis *quæ extant,* (Bipont. edit.) Tom. I. p. 143.

‡ Ibid. p. 184.

of animals like them in disposition. "Those who have been enslaved," said he, "to appetite and passion, will put on the form of asses and other like beasts; the injurious, tyrannical, and rapacious, that of wolves, hawks, and kites; and they who diligently practise temperance and justice, having acquired these qualities by custom and discipline, without philosophy and intelligence, will go into the bodies of animals of gentle and social habits, such as bees, wasps, and ants, or else into human bodies like their own." * The views of Plato are understood to be expressed in his representations of those of his master.† Cicero at times expresses a strong confidence that the soul, in a state of happiness, will survive the death of the body; ‡ but, at other times,§ and particularly on one occasion, when the strength of his conviction may be supposed to have been brought to the test, after the death of a beloved daughter,‖ he speaks altogether doubtingly upon the subject. The mind of Seneca was equally or more unsettled. "I have easily," he says in one place, "yielded assent in this matter to the judgments of great men, who have rather promised than proved a thing much to be

* *Phædo.* Platonis *quæ extant,* Tom. I. pp. 186, 187.

† See particularly the latter part of his last book *de Republicâ.* Ibid. Tom. VII. pp. 310 – 338.

‡ Particularly in the first book of the *Tusculan Questions,* and in the fragment of *The Dream of Scipio.*

§ *Epist,* Lib. vi. Epist. 3, 4. 21.

‖ *De Consolatione;* e. g. ubi supra, Tom. XVII. pp. 290. 296. For numerous references establishing Cicero's unsettled state of mind, as well as that of others of the most famous ancients, who have raised the question of immortality, see Bishop Law's *Considerations on the Theory of Religion,* pp. 117 *et seq.*

desired;* and in others he even goes so far as to speak of death as equivalent to non-existence. "Death," is his language in one passage, "is for that, which has been, to be no longer." . . . . . "And of what moment is it whether you never began, or, having begun, cease, to be? The effect of both alike is, non-existence."† The expressions of Plutarch are less fluctuating; but, though he has argued with earnestness for the probability of the doctrine in question,‡ he elsewhere adopts the language of the most complete indecision on the subject.§

* *Epist.* 102.

† "Mors est, non esse id, quod ante fuit. Sed quale sit, jam scio. Hoc erit post me, quod ante me fuit. Si quid in hac re tormenti est, necesse est et fuisse antequam prodiremus in lucem. Atqui nullam sensimus tunc vexationem. Rogo, non stultissimum dicas, siquis existimet lucernæ pejus esse cum extincta est, quam antequam accenderetur? Nos quoque et accendimur, et extinguimur. Medio illo tempore aliquid patimur; utrimque vero alta securitas est. In hoc enim, mi Lucili, ni fallor, erramur, quod mortem judicamus sequi, cum illa et præcesserit, et secutura sit. Quicquid ante nos fuit, mors est. Quid enim refert, utrum non incipias, an desinas? Utriusque rei hic est effectus, non esse." — *Epist.* 54. — Again; "Mors omnium dolorum et solutio est et finis, ultra quam mala nostra non exeunt; quæ nos in illam tranquillitatem, in quâ antequam nasceremur jacuimus, reponit. Si mortuorum aliquis misereturet, et non natorum misereatur. Mors nec bonum, nec malum est. Id enim potest aut bonum aut malum esse, quod aliquid est. Quod vero ipsum nihil est, et omnia in nihilum redigit, nulli nos fortunæ tradit. Mala enim bonaque circa aliquam versantur materiam. Non potest id fortuna tenere, quod natura dimisit; nec potest miser esse, qui nullus est." — *Consol. ad Marciam*, cap. 19.

‡ *De Serâ Numinis Vindictâ.* Opp. Tom. VIII. (edit. Reiske,) p. 165 *et seq.*

§ *Consol. ad Apollon.* Ibid. Tom. VII. pp. 407 – 422. I do not lay stress on the expression, "the fabulous hope of immortality," τὸ μυθώδες τῆς ἀϊδιότητος ἐλπίς, in the treatise "Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicuri Decreta" (Ibid. Tom. X. p. 543), as μυθώδες is equivocal. Plutarch, however, in the same passage calls the fear of punishment after death, "a childish fear;" τὸ παιδικὸν ἐκεῖνο δέος.

Such, and no better, were the views, on this great subject, of a few sages selected from all antiquity as the best examples of the adoption of a belief, which is needed in every soul as the spring of virtuous effort, and the support under the disappointments and hardships of a troubled life. Had their views possessed a definiteness and permanence, which is by no means in truth to be attributed to them, they were after all but the solitary speculations of individual men, separated both by the superiority of their minds, and the peculiarity of their pursuits, from the common sympathies of mankind. Had they and all their brotherhood thought much more rightly than in fact any one of them did think, it would still have remained true, that the race was in ignorance of the great practical religious doctrine which it was most concerned to know.

With such errors as were entertained concerning the nature of higher powers even by those who believed in their existence, and such an ignorance as prevailed concerning the future destiny of the soul, it is clear that there could be no opportunity for the culture of the religious affections, strictly so called. Those feelings, which, connecting man with the Divinity, introduce him to his best dignity and happiness, — which are competent to nerve him for all difficulties, and tranquillize him under all vexations and sorrows, and give him, while yet on earth, the vigor and the joys of an immortal, — in such a state of things remained of

necessity undeveloped, and the same as if there were no capacity for them in human nature.

But, further, the whole moral aspect of things, in the absence of that light which Christianity was needed to shed, only showed to what horrible moral perversity a high state of intellectual civilization tends, when there is not a religious element to secure and direct it. Both the limits of the occasion and the nature of the subject forbid me to go into details of the shocking moral obliquities of the age to which our religion first addressed itself; but no one, who has looked at all at the condition of the time, needs to be told by me, that it was such that the heart sickens in the contemplation of it. In the more ancient of the two classical nations, notwithstanding single examples of great energy under some present excitement, the fruit of circumstances acting on a most mercurial temperament, I fear that there was at no time much of any thing, which, in a moral estimate, is entitled to respect. But, however this may be, the course of preceding political revolution had, at the time when Christianity appeared, divested the fickle Greek of that self-respect, which had in other days been the strongest tie he had to virtue; and the versatile spirit of that extraordinary race, broken down to a pliable servility, no longer showed its resources, except by proficiency in the arts of baseness and licentiousness. The stern qualities which the Roman had ventured to call his virtues, because they had stood by him so well in his conspiracy against

the welfare of all the rest of mankind, — his frugality, temperance, contempt of hardship and danger, and devotion to the public weal, — had given way before the progress of the luxurious habits learned in the remote regions where he had been marauding, and the contrasted features of a fierce with a voluptuous and feeble selfishness had become fully developed in his character.

Under such appliances the native moral sense had been sufficiently weakened or perverted to allow a vicious religion to do its whole demoralizing work. The very services of religion were, in many instances, mere atrocious orgies of cruelty and libertinism. Not to speak of the barbarous nations, in the refined communities of Greece there is unquestionable authority for the fact of human sacrifices having been statedly offered at certain seasons and solemnities, as well as on occasions of peculiar exultation or distress; * and in Rome accounts are given by unexceptionable witnesses, as Livy,† Plutarch,‡ and Porphyry,§ of the practice of the same enormity, continued according to the two last-named writers far down into the time of the emperors, and indeed only yielding at last to the disgust which Christianity had excited against it. On the other hand, the acceptable worship of some of the deities, as of Bacchus, of Ceres, of Venus, of Cybele, was the

* Porphyry *de Abstinentiâ ab Animal. necand.* Lib. ii. § 27, 54 – 56; Clement of Alexandria, *Cohort. ad Gent.* Opp. p. 36 (edit. Ox.)

† Lib. xxii. cap. 57 (Tom. IV. p. 73, edit. Bipont.)

‡ *Vita Marcelli*, § 3 (Tom. II. p. 404.)

§ Ubi supra, § 56.

extremest grossness of licentious vice, in which not only purity was outraged, but all decency was defied. The temples of religion were the haunts of flagitious sin, and the nearer the altar the more shameless the crime. The statements illustrative of this point, which have come down to us from antiquity, would be all but incredible, if they were not perfectly well authenticated. St. Augustine found reason to complain; "Such things are found in the heathen religious books as even grave poets have esteemed unfit for their verses." * But it is impossible to enter into the recital. It is little to say that the assertion of St. Paul is abundantly borne out, where, describing the moral state of the Gentile world when addressed by Christianity, he declares, that, "being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, they gave themselves over unto lasciviousness, to commit all impurity with greediness."

Voltaire, extolling this deplorable substitute for religion, has said, that "the religion of the Pagans consisted only in morality and in festivals; morality, which is common to men of all times and places, and festivals, which were only rejoicings, and could do no injury to mankind." Whether such festivals as have been referred to can do injury, is a question of easy solution. And, as to morality, with the exception of the demoralizing

* *De Consol.* Lib. vi. cap. 7. (Ubi supra, p. 350.)

influences of opinions entertained concerning the character of the gods, and of the worship by which the devotee sought to secure their favor, the fact is, that nothing could be held more distinct than were the provinces of religion and morality. With us Christians, religion is the universal sanction of morality. Under the ancient systems of polytheism, it was nothing of the kind. Religious duty, such as it was, was the duty of reverential worship and costly offerings. It did not pretend to take under its cognizance the conduct of daily life. So well remarks Locke; "The religion of the heathens little concerned itself in their morals. The priests, that delivered the oracles of heaven, and pretended to speak from the gods, spoke little of virtue and a good life."* Nor was the remark original with him. Lactantius, a Christian father of the fourth century, an actual observer of what he commented upon, had used nearly the same language. "In the religious discussions of the Pagans," said he, "there is nothing which is profitable for the regulation of morals, and the guidance of life." And again; "The philosophy of life, and the religion of the gods, are things distinct, and independent of each other."† The brutal taste which made the mortal combats of gladiators with wild beasts and with one another the favorite amusement of the people,—the contemptuous dismissal of all integrity,

* *Reasonableness of Christianity.* Works, Vol. VII. (edit. Lond.) p. 144.
† *Divin. Instit.* Lib. iv. § 3. Tom. I. p 248. (edit. Bipont.)

public and private, which led the honest satirist to say, that the sovereign city of the world was the great mart where "every thing was on sale,"*— the universal dissoluteness of manners, which had banished all the humanizing influences of the domestic ties,—these were but the most prominent features of a condition of social degeneracy, in which all individual virtue pined, all self-respect was forfeited, decency ceased to awe, and the natural competition was, as to who should be most envied and eminent by becoming most corrupt.

I have no fear that this picture will be pronounced too darkly shaded, by any one who has possessed himself of only a general acquaintance with the character of an age, concerning which the broad lights of history do not permit us to be under any great misapprehension. We have reached the question, Was such a state of things to be permitted to last; or was the divine benevolence concerned in its being altered? Is it to be supposed, that God, who made the race of men, had any compassion for them? And, if so, was it not to be hoped, at least, that he would make some provision for their rescue from such debasement? Certainly, none of the objects of his benevolence could be served by their continuing in the condition to which they had reduced themselves. Help must come from some quarter, or all was lost. Could it,—we are speaking of moral

* Juvenal, Sat. iii. 183.

possibilities or probabilities, — could it be expected to come from themselves? In the exercise of their own free will, they had reduced themselves to this state of delusion and degradation. Was there in themselves any element of recovery from it?

Is it possible not to answer this question in the negative? The deistical writers have, from the necessity of the argument, been led to maintain that a special revelation was not to be expected, because all which it could be needed to disclose was already discoverable by the light of reason; and the most respectable of them, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, has specified five propositions, which he affirms to constitute a sufficient system of religious knowledge, and to be all sufficiently taught by natural religion. The incompleteness of the list may hereafter claim our notice, when I come to speak of the system of that writer. And, imperfect as it is, to go into any argument respecting the discoverableness, by the light of nature, of some of the doctrines specified in it, — as the immortality of the soul, and a final righteous retribution, — would be entirely superfluous; for, where experience can be referred to in such instances, it is incomparably the best instructor; and, in this instance, the fact does speak for itself, with an explicitness which defies contradiction. That the doctrine of the soul's immortality, a doctrine indispensable to a practical religious system, was within all men's reach, — so as, being intelligently and firmly believed, to become to them a

motive to right conduct, — cannot possibly be maintained, in the face of the fact, that the best minds of antiquity, trained in as high a culture as the world has ever known (independent of that which Christianity affords), and devotedly intent on making the discovery (so as actually to master all the arguments from natural religion which are in our possession at this day), obtained nothing that can be called knowledge on the subject; far the larger portion ending with a denial of what Christianity has avouched to us to be the truth; and the few, who might be thought exceptions, attaining to no distinct persuasion, expressing scarcely more than hope at any time, expressing themselves inconsistently at different times, and, on occasions when the truth, had it been theirs, would have been unspeakably precious to them, finding even the hope of more cheerful days giving way. No; the prospects of humanity were utterly dark. All that activity of mind, which had attended its rise on the scale of intellectual refinement, had not only wrought out no religious truth, but had actually led to the invention of baleful varieties of religious error. In the fermenting mass of thought, no element of a redemption to better things could be discerned, but rather the powerfully active causes of permanent and still increasing corruption. The moral world was sick to death, unless a remedy should be applied to its raging distemper; and he who understands himself to be speaking of something real, when he speaks

of the attribute of benevolence in God, will be prepared to believe that that benevolence would interpose. It could not have a more appropriate office. If it were, in truth, any thing that the name imports, it could not remain unmoved by such a spectacle.

If the circumstances were such as to make the occasion for relief urgent, so, further, they were such as to make the application of relief timely, which was the second proposition I undertook to maintain. I have argued, that, at the time of the introduction of Christianity, a special revelation of religious truth was needed; I am next to show that it was seasonable, so that, if made, it would not have to be ineffectual, as to all appearance it would have been, if made at any earlier time, unless indeed it had been so made as to coerce, instead of merely influencing, the mind of man,— a method which God never adopts, nor ever can, from the nature of the case, in respect to a religious administration, inasmuch as a religious administration, intended to rectify the will, must of course recognise and respect its freedom. And this seasonableness of the Christian revelation I am briefly to illustrate in three particulars, though others might be added.

The first of them is, that now, for the first time in the history of the world, there existed a widely-extended community of civilized states, affording facility for a free and rapid communication of knowledge from any quarter where it might be

earliest possessed, to others far remote from it. The Babylonish and Persian conquests had each long before consolidated a great family of nations under one iron sway; but commerce and civilization were then in that immature state, that, as to all purposes of interchange of thought and truth, the members of the coerced alliance might almost as well have remained politically independent. The Greek empire, which had added a new province with every forced march of "Macedonia's madman," can hardly be said ever to have been established. Its founder never saw the capital, from which would have been issued the laws designed to compact his widely-scattered possessions into one society, from the day that he first set out from it on his vast adventures; and the empire broke up again into fragments, as soon as his own controlling arm was withdrawn.

The sway of Rome was a permanent one; and it grew up at an age when there had been and was an energetic and far-extended action of the mind. All the states, which, under the separate sceptres of the lieutenants of Alexander and their successors, the philosophy and arts of Greece had brought within the range of civilization, had afforded so many triumphs to the all-grasping ambition of the imperial city. There was but one civilization in the world, and that was Greek; there was but one rule under which it was protected, and that was Roman. The business-like, order-loving, resolute, covetous despotism of Rome

overspread no disjointed dominion. Its police followed every where close in the train of its arms; its *fasces* travelled in the very shadow of its rapacious eagles; the mile-stones that marked the distance from its forum stood in Britain, in Africa, by the pillars of Hercules, and beyond the Tigris. Not an utterance could there be in the most distant province, that was not forthwith echoed from the Seven Hills, and whatever reverberated from them went forth with a clearness that made it audible at the ends of the earth. Christianity was first preached in the little, remote provincial capital of a people, whom Tacitus called "a most despicable race of slaves";* but presently a fisherman from the lake of Tiberias, and a Cilician student in the Rabbinical schools, have brought it to Rome; and presently after the same historian is writing of Christians at Rome, "a vast multitude,"† and Pliny, from his proconsular governments of Pontus and Bithynia in Asia Minor, is acquainting the emperor Trajan, that "there are many addicted to this superstition, of every age and of both sexes, nor has the contagion seized cities only, but smaller towns also, and the open country;"‡ and, in one hundred years after the ascension of Jesus, one of the confessors of his faith, Justin Martyr, finds occasion to say; "There is not a nation, either of Greek or barbarian, or

* *Hist.* Lib. v. cap. 8, (edit. Bost. Nov-Ang. Tom. II. p. 409.)
† Tac. *Ann.* Lib. xv. cap. 44, (edit. Bost. Nov-Ang. Tom. II. p. 77.)
‡ C. Plin. *Epist.* Lib. x. epist. 97, (Tom. II. p. 123, edit. Bipont.)

or any other name, even of those who wander in tribes, and live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe by the name of the crucified Jesus;"* and, fifty years later, another, Tertullian, specifies, among proselytes to the holy faith, "the Moors and Getulians of Africa, the districts of Spain, several nations of France, and parts of Britain inaccessible to the Romans, the Sarmatians, Dacians, Germans, and Scythians."† And a part of this last testimony suggests a further remark under this head. The peculiar position of the Roman power led to an easy transmission of any new form of thought, and, among the rest, of the Christian faith, even beyond the limits of its actual conquests. Civilization was at the centre of the empire, but, on its outskirts, all around, were the less cultivated or barbarous races; and these made the proper line of communication, as far as there was communication of any kind, with the savage nations beyond them.

Thus Christianity was revealed seasonably, because of the unprecedented facilities then existing for its wide and rapid propagation. I can but advert, here, in a word, to a related fact, which might afford occasion for not a little interesting remark. In the sequel of the four successive conquests of their country by the great foreign powers, a large portion of the Jewish race, carrying with them

* *Dial.* § 117, (p. 211, edit. Paris.)
† *Adversus Jud.* § 7, (p. 189, edit. Paris.)

everywhere their religion, their language, their sacred books, the knowledge of their history, and the worship of their synagogues, had been widely dispersed through the regions which had now become provinces of the Roman empire, and were accordingly every where at hand, reluctantly furnishing important confirmations and illustrations of facts announced by the preachers of Christianity.

That seasonableness of the Christian revelation, —or, to phrase it more cautiously, that fitness of the period for a revelation,— which I am now illustrating, appears again from the fact, that it was a period of great activity of the mind. Sciences, letters, arts, were assiduously cultivated. The adventures of commerce were prosecuted with great diligence and enterprise. The warlike tone of the times allowed no slumber of the faculties, and even the culpable inventive avidity for pleasure indicates any thing but a mere torpor of the mind. The endlessly discordant philosophical speculations which were rife, prove much more than a restless excitement of the minds which were actually engaged in them. They err, who suppose that, when the surface of the intellectual ocean is in uproar, its depths are ever still. Philosophers do not live in so sequestered a world, as to be independent, in their habits of mind, of the influences of surrounding society. When they are busy, it is a sign that others are busy too; about something different, it is likely, from what occupies them, but still about something; they are never known to keep wrang-

ling, while others sleep. Besides, an age fruitful in such vast political movements could by no means be a passive, quiescent, unimpressible age. Men's feelings of curiosity, wonder, alarm, triumph, and despondency, could not fail, in such a state of things, to be much too often called forth for this. To search after, and, without searching, to be addressed by something new, was actually the habit of the day. They might deny; they might rail; they might abuse; but listen, consider, and discuss,—this they would and did.

Further; in those quarters, where subjects of philosophy were the matter of investigation, the leading questions of religion had been very largely and inquisitively canvassed. It is perfectly apparent, from the ample and elaborate treatment of the great problems of theology, which books of that age still preserve,—while they bear testimony to others, now perished, which handled the same theme,—that an earnest curiosity existed concerning those questions, however little in other respects the age may have been marked by the character which we would have it bear; and if, with the authors of such books and with men like them, the pride of false opinion, and that attachment to a mere system of old technics which is always one of the strong holds where error longest maintains itself, forbade the reception of instruction on the subject of their thought, because offered from a quarter and in a way different from what they had expected, still the curiosity, which their debates had communicated

to men of less pretension and fewer entanglements, remained to demand and welcome an answer which they had not been able to supply.

I find a third mark of the fitness of the time when Christianity was promulgated, in the fact that the inefficacy of attempts to arrive by other methods at the knowledge of what is most important to be known, had now been fully manifested by the experiment, and was by many minds painfully felt. Not a few were prepared to receive light on this highest world of thought from a divine source, because they knew that that reason of theirs, which was their only other medium of discovery, offered no promise of any thing beyond its past discoveries. It had been interrogated curiously, skilfully, importunately, and fruitlessly; and if no satisfactory response had under such appliances been extorted from it, none satisfactory could it have to give. The same was true of that absolute deficiency of needful moral influence, which the experiment had equally disclosed. Society may be very depraved, and yet contain individuals, who have enough of a better nature left, to look on its condition with habitual sorrow and disgust. Men may be very depraved themselves, and yet see with perfect clearness that to themselves, as well as in the abstract, the depravity which surrounds them is a prodigious evil; and few can be so depraved as not to know times, when the thought of the innocence and honor which have been renounced will not warm and invite, while it rebukes them.

When I speak of the period of the promulgation of Christianity as being seasonable, because it was that, when the insufficiency of influences existing in the world to teach men truth and goodness had been palpably evinced in the trial, I am but bringing to view a familiar principle of divine operation, agreeably to which a taste and desire for what is excellent are inspired in us, by means of exciting such a lively distaste for its odious opposite, as only an experiment of the character and consequences of this latter can create. It was natural that men should have that confidence in their reason which would make them less alive to the claims of a revelation professing to have been sent to assist it, till they had fully sounded the depths of that reason, and found that there were discoveries of the highest importance which it was wholly incompetent to make. Actual, long, and large experience of the practical ill consequences of error, was needed to give them a proper sensibility to the immense practical worth of truth. There had been a surfeit of folly and vice. How was relief to be had? Where were wisdom and virtue to be found? Not in a continuance of the investigations and inventions which had hitherto proved so unavailing. Not in imported forms of worship and philosophy. Brought into closer political relations with each other than had before existed, each nation had opportunity to look at the superstitions of the rest, and to see that they were as undeserving of credit, and as unpromising of good, as its own. With all

the adverse influences, moral and intellectual, with which our religion on its first publication had to struggle, it could not but be, on the other hand, that many minds in all orders of society, disgusted and wearied with the existing state of things, would be disposed to meet with welcome what held forth a hope of reform.

And this brings me to the third proposition, by maintaining which I proposed to establish the point of the conformity of the Christian revelation to such conditions, as make its miracles credible. It results from the first two propositions, that a special revelation was a credible event at the time when Christianity was published. But, in order to be satisfied of the credibility of the special revelation of such a system as we know that of Christianity to be, it is necessary for us further to see, from an examination of it, that it was a system suited to meet the want, which we have ascertained to have existed and to have been felt. And here comes up that important use of the internal evidence, as it is called in distinction from the historical, which I had in view, when, in my first Lecture, I specified one of the true uses of that internal evidence whose province and import are often misunderstood, as being to prepare the way for the external. No matter how clearly we had shown that a revelation was needed and to be desired; if the particular revelation, whose claims we were maintaining, were seen to be unsuited to meet the alleged want, the argument from one to the other would be mani-

festly worthless. Without the internal evidence, we could not advance here a step; we could not settle a basis for the historical proof to stand upon. Christianity must rest, for its evidence, on its conformity to the perfections of God, in respect to its character, as well as to its occasion. Did we on examination see, for instance, that it affirmed contradictions, we should need no further indication that it did not come from the God of truth. Did it teach immoralities, here would be decisive proof that it was no message from him whom Nature proclaims, through all her works, to be immaculately holy, and whom all the course of his providential administration exhibits as delighting in holiness. Did it only repeat what was known before, or did it teach what was merely futile, or even what was but imperfectly and feebly adapted to the existing need, it would then be manifested for an object not worthy to occasion a disturbance of the order of nature; and all the argument drawn from the actual necessity for something to instruct and reform, would fail of application to it. On the other hand, was it marked by a close and universal adaptation to the moral wants of man, and especially by an adaptation to them the more conspicuous the more it was studied, here would arise a strong positive presumption in favor of its having proceeded from Him, who could perfectly estimate and provide for the exigency which he saw and compassionated.

What the character of Christianity is, in this

respect, is a fact which can scarcely be set in new lights by any argument, or needs any argument to establish it. No one doubts that the influences of that religion are all powerfully on the side of virtue. Infidels have vied with Christians in doing homage to its divine spirit, as well as in extolling the unrivalled excellence of its author. I shall not undertake to give an account of the system of Christianity, with its provisions for restoring the innocence, and maturing the goodness, of human nature, because whoever does this takes the risk of including more, or fewer, or other things in his description, than what make up the idea of his fellow-Christians. But all who understand the first part of duty, and the first source of happiness, to be found in the soul's reasonable and affectionate veneration for, and confidence in, its unseen sovereign, find in this religion the representations made, and the motives urged, which are suited above all others to establish, quicken, and refine those feelings; and they who look no further than to those social and personal obligations, the fulfilment of which makes a man respected and beloved, see cause to own, that, through its expositions and enforcements of all dispositions and deeds of justice, benevolence, and purity, and the authority with which it enforces them on such as allow its claims, it does a work upon the heart far beyond the power of all acts of legislation, all the precepts of the schools, all the coercion of public sentiment, when public sentiment is most enlightened, all the esteem

that follows uprightness, disinterestedness, and a self-command that rejects the dominion of base desire. Christianity met the cruel and vindictive spirit of the ancient world with its lessons of meek, gentle, long-suffering, generous virtue. The prevailing brutal licentiousness it assailed with its precepts of uncompromising purity. It placed its wise and strong restrictions on evil dispositions and evil thoughts, aiming to crush in its rudiments the sin, which, fully grown, would have established its empire too securely to be dispossessed. It awed with the majesty of its self-renouncing spirit the cold and hard selfishness of the time. It uttered the new commandment, to overlook and overleap the dividing and estranging bounds of kindred, sect, time, and country, and include the distant, the unrelated, the unworthy, and the hostile, in the all-embracing grasp of a cordial philanthropy. Men had wallowed, one in one direction, another in another, in the pollutions of earth. They had been engrossed by the unsatisfying objects of the animal nature. It called on them to regard themselves as immortals. It taught them their fellowship with higher orders of existence, and their capacity for endless and boundless spiritual improvement and satisfactions. It was what men needed in their state of debasement and hopelessness to recover them to duty, honor, and peace, and what they could not fail to feel that they needed, as soon as its penetrating truth could pierce through

the harsh defences which steeled them against a ready submission to its claims.

I argued, under the first and third heads under which my remarks this evening have been arranged, that, at the time when Christianity was published, the human race was wretchedly suffering, in respect to its highest interests, for want of such a revelation of religious truth, as Christianity, when revealed, was found to contain; and that, unaided reason, through a period of active thought and high civilization, having exerted its best power upon those problems which needed to be solved in order to a better state of things, and found them intractable, there existed in the world no element of recovery, and no ground for hope, except it should be furnished by a supernatural divine interposition. My observations under the second head, that of the seasonableness of the revelation, bore upon the question, why it should have been made at the time when it was made, and not earlier. When made, it became a permanent institution; and, having wrought some portion of its destined effects, having meliorated the style of speculation and sentiment and the condition of society for us of this age, we are of course obliged to look into history in order fully to be satisfied what a waste of sin and wo the world tended to become without it; our own experience will not fully apprize us of its infinite worth to the well-being of man, so far as this is manifested by the ills which it undertook to cure. And yet a reflecting

mind will by no means need to rest the fact entirely on the testimony of the condition of past, unchristian ages. It can understand its own wants, wants arising from the weakness and the strength of its nature, and appreciate the admirable fitness of this religion to supply them. When it asks itself what it would itself be, what would become of the thoughts and feelings that give it most elevation and pleasure, where would be its stores of consolation, its impulses to virtuous effort, its superiority, in short, both in acting and suffering, to all that annoys, discourages, and tempts, if it had not the doctrines, for instance, of the paternal character of God, and of a future endless life, — and then considers whether it could know any thing about those doctrines, unless it had been instructed concerning them by Christianity, — it has the witness in itself, the irrefragable testimony of its deepest emotions, of its most intimate experience, that the instructions of Christianity are indispensable to the well-being of God's moral world.

And, if, on the one hand, it is reference to a past state of things, that most fully shows from experience the urgency of the want, it is observation of the actual efficacy of the faith, that best shows from experience the fitness and excellence of the provision made for its supply. Christianity has by no means done all its destined work; but this hinders not that we should estimate what it has done, and what it is doing. It has done enough to show, that what is yet undone is to be charged, not to

any want of virtue in itself, but to the dulness of disciples, whom through their own fault it has but partially quickened. This it has done. It has plucked from men's minds, wherever it has been received, the delusions which made them bold, and shameless, and emulous in sin, and the ignorance which took no note of moral distinctions. It has introduced among them the sense of obligation, and of accountableness to a higher power. It has made the future existence a thought of familiar reality. It has imparted the idea of the nobleness of virtue, an idea which can never be lost, a fructifying idea, which can never be buried. In particular, it has given birth to the before undreamed of conceptions of a filial piety, of an unlimited enterprising philanthropy, of a strenuous self-control, of the dignity of a pure life, of the efficiency and loveliness of a pure heart. It has exhibited some illustrious examples of the work which it proposes to do, examples immovably conspicuous, and quietly but forcibly attractive, for ever. It has formed some characters, such as the ancient world had absolutely, not to say, no specimens, but no notion, of. It has infused great and ennobling conceptions into literature, — that is, into the reservoir of men's best thoughts, — and given them a position such as that they kindle the highest enthusiasm of the choicest spirits, such as that the lights of the race feed on and rejoice in them. It has not reformed the race ; for that, let the sordid and low propensities, which it was its business to

oppose, and which have neglected, misused, and resisted it, answer. But it has fairly introduced an element of reform, of omnipotent energy; a principle of purification and progress, of such life and force, that whoever estimates its essential competency to the great work, or has watched its hitherto partially developed tendencies, does not easily fall into any despondency concerning the moral prospects of the race.

Having argued in my last Lecture, that a miraculous revelation from the Deity is credible under certain conditions, I have this evening shown the actual existence of such conditions at the time of the alleged miraculous revelation in Christianity. We proceed next to consider the positive testimony to that revelation; the first point of which is, the genuineness and integrity of those books, called the *Four Gospels*, which have descended to us from antiquity, professing to contain a true record of the ministry of Jesus.

LECTURE IV.

AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

I HAVE hitherto been preparing the way for a fair and rational reception of the positive evidence in favor of the claims of our religion; and I shall not be thought to have given a disproportionate share of attention to this part of the argument, by any who are acquainted with the position of the controversy, and have observed to how great an extent the objections of that class of unbelievers, who have the best title to be listened to, and who have actually produced the most effect, have related to abstract preliminary questions.

In my second Lecture, was shown, first, the antecedent credibility of miraculous operations, when alleged as occurring under certain supposable conditions or circumstances, of a nature to identify their probability with the probability that the attributes of the Deity would dictate a resort to them; and, secondly, the adequateness of

human testimony, when sufficient in amount, to establish their actual occurrence. So far, it will have been perceived, the reasoning upon both points was hypothetical. Miracles were credible, provided certain circumstances could be shown to exist, preceding and attendant upon their alleged occurrence. The testimony which affirmed their occurrence was credible, provided there was no fault to find with its clearness and amount.

The first of these provisos I accordingly proceeded to consider in my last Lecture, wherein I showed that the facts were such as to meet the condition specified; that is, that, at the time when Christianity appeared, there was such need of a direct revelation of religious truth, and such favorable opportunity for its introduction so as not to fail of doing its work, as to make it evidently consistent with the attributes of God, and a course indeed to be expected from them, that he should interpose with extraordinary communications; and that, further, Christianity was actually such a religion as met the existing want, and such, accordingly, as it is altogether credible that God, so interposing, should reveal. I proceed now to take up the other point; namely, that of the sufficiency in amount of that testimony, which, being sufficient in amount, has been shown to be, of its nature, credible and valid. And thus we have arrived at a consideration of the positive evidence produced by Christianity in maintenance of its claim to our reception.

Who produces this evidence? Who bears this testimony? Who undertakes to satisfy us, from facts within his knowledge, that Christianity is from God? That is what we want first to know, in order to decide what confidence we may repose in, what satisfaction we may derive from him. The credibility of the witness, determined by considerations of his character, his opportunities for informing himself, and the influences under which he testifies, is the measure of the credibility of the testimony which he gives. And, along with this, we need to distinguish between what is in fact his testimony, and what may be the testimony of some other. We want to know whether he has actually declared all that in any quarter he is represented to have declared, or only a part of it; because, since the authority which we may ascribe to him, be it greater or less, rests upon considerations of his personal capacity and good faith, that authority is incapable of being transferred. It is only what he has actually said, and not that which has from any cause become connected with what he has said, that we can take upon his credit.

To apply these very obvious statements to the case in hand. The testimony to which we have to attend is that of men, who are alleged to have laid it before us in writing, in what are called the canonical books of the New Testament; and, in particular, the direct attestation to the deeds and discourses of Jesus is given in four short compositions, called the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke,

and John; two of them, said to be of the number of the twelve apostles, who were his intimate companions during his own ministry; and the other two, companions of apostles, and distinguished among the early preachers of our faith. If these men were to utter any testimony to distant ages, the proper medium, of course, was written words. Spoken words, from the nature of the case, were out of the question; and the only other method of communication with posterity, would have been the transmission of their testimony through oral tradition, a far less trustworthy channel. And if we can be satisfied, and in proportion as we are satisfied, that we have their written words beneath our eye, that testimony is as truly theirs, and as good for our conviction, as if the words were uttered to us by their lips; unless, indeed, one should choose to say that it might be even better, in so far as written testimony may be supposed to be, on the whole, the more deliberate and more carefully weighed.

Here, then, we have the double question upon the *authenticity* or genuineness, and the *integrity*, of the Gospels. Were those books, in the first place, each taken as a whole, the compositions of the persons whose names they respectively bear; and if so, then, secondly, do they remain entirely, or substantially, what they were when they came from their authors' hands, without addition or corruption from other quarters? "Without addition, or corruption," I say. There is yet another form,

that of mutilation, in which it is supposable that they might have suffered change. They might have lost some portion of what they once contained. But though this inquiry, certainly not without its own interest, would have to be conducted on the same grounds as the others, and would, I am satisfied, terminate in the same way, I do not entertain it particularly, because the question, whether the evangelists originally comprehended in their books more testimony than has descended from them to our day, has no direct bearing upon the material one, whether what has descended to our day is authentic. That there was more to tell, and that they actually told more in other ways, than we now find written in these books, whether we have them complete or not, is not only a thing probable, in itself, in the highest degree, but is actually declared by St. John, who says, that "many other things did Jesus, not written in this book, the which, if they should be written every one, it would seem that the world would not have room for the record."

And now, in proceeding to the inquiry respecting the source and authority of our testimony, let us perceive distinctly where we stand. After the remarks which have been made, I feel myself justified, as a disciple and humble advocate of Christianity, in taking high ground as to the further question. If the reasoning which I have submitted, to the point, that, under the existing circumstances, a miraculous revelation was a credible

event, be sound, then I protest against the attempt, as utterly fallacious and senseless, to discredit the authenticity of the record, on the ground that it actually testifies to a miraculous revelation. I will attend patiently to the proof of the authenticity of the record, and endeavour to make up a cautious opinion upon it, as I would in relation to that of any other book; and more than in respect to any other, because of the paramount importance of this. But I cannot consent any longer to have foreign elements blended with the question. After the explanations which have been made, I can no longer listen to any one who shall say, that however abundant is the proof for the authenticity of these books, however sufficient to satisfy if alleged for other writings, he yet hesitates to yield to it in respect to these, because of the nature of their contents, because of their relating a miraculous history. I refuse any longer to be put off with any thing so vague and irrelevant. I cannot agree that any one shall thus trifle with himself and me.

There is an argument which has no place in the books of logic, but which is commonly known by the name of *throwing dust in the eyes.* It is an argument not so often unavailingly used as it deserves, but it is no argument for men. I call on the unbeliever to renounce and disdain it. I invite him to define and maintain the side scruple, with which he thinks to parry the direct proof for the genuineness of these books, or else to abandon it. Let him refute the reasoning which has been used

upon this subject, or let him admit its validity and act accordingly.

I do not undertake to say, as has been said, that we should reasonably receive the alleged books of the four evangelists as genuine on the same ground of uncontradicted ancient report, that we unhesitatingly receive those, for instance, of Cicero or Cæsar; for I agree that the witness who testifies to an extraordinary history, should, for that reason, be the more narrowly watched. I do not even use the argument implied by Paley, where, remarking that the works of Bede exhibit many wonderful relations, he asks, "Who, for that reason, doubts that they were written by Bede?" For if, in a work ascribed to that venerable father, I should find testimony to some fact, at variance with the laws of nature, as having occurred beneath his own eye, I should at once take up a suspicion that it was not his writing, for the plain reason that otherwise I should have to suppose the testimony of a man, in my opinion upright and intelligent, to have been given for a statement which I did not believe to be true. I should believe that there was something wrong, unless, — for there is the point, — I should perceive circumstances making a miraculous intervention of the Deity, in his day, an antecedently credible event. But, this seen, I should no longer be under any embarrassment in respect to positive evidence, adduced to substantiate the authenticity of such a record. I should be prepared to weigh it then, in the same manner

as that produced for any other book. And such, I confidently submit, is the only course for a reasonable man to take in respect to the records of the evangelical history.

These views premised, I proceed to give some account of the kind of proof we have, that the four memoirs of the acts and discourses of Jesus, called the *Four Gospels*, were the compositions of the persons whose names they bear; in other words, that they contain the testimony of those persons.

That this has been the opinion of Christians in all the later ages, is a point which it would be of no use for me to press, both because no one would be disposed to deny it, and because the opinion of the later ages upon such a matter would be of no value, except as it was justified by good information derived by them from the earlier. I will produce no authority more recent than the end of the third century after the ministry of Jesus. It will presently be seen, that it is far within this period, — that it is within the first two hundred years, — that the whole ground of controversy lies. But it was about three hundred years after Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem, that the faith he revealed became under Constantine the religion of the Roman empire. And it is interesting to observe, what was the standing of the books before us at that particular juncture; an inquiry which it so happens that we have the most satisfactory means of answering. Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, a copious writer, was a contemporary of

the first Christian emperor, and much trusted by him. He has repeatedly spoken of the canon of the New Testament as it was received in his day, and in the most express and exact terms. As his testimony is of course not of the same importance in the argument with that of others of earlier date, I will content myself with only a specimen or two of his language, requesting attention however to the positive terms in which he speaks of the universality and antiquity of the opinion entertained by the Church in his time. "Let us reckon over," says he, "the uncontradicted writings of this apostle [John]; and first of all must be mentioned the Gospel according to him, well known to *all the churches under heaven*." * Then follows a reason of his own, accounting for its being placed, in the New Testament collection, after the other three, which, as it is irrelevant to our purpose, I shall not transcribe. After this he proceeds to say, "of all the disciples [that is, apostles] of our Lord, Matthew and John only have left us any memoirs. . . . . And when Mark and Luke had published the Gospels according to them, ... the three first Gospels being now *delivered to all men*, and to John himself, they say that he approved them and testified to their truth." † The title of the twenty-fifth chapter of the third book of his Ecclesiastical History, is, "Of the Scriptures universally acknowledged, and those that are not so;"

* *Hist. Eccles.* Lib. iii. cap. 24 (edit. Cantab. p. 115). † Ibid. p. 116.

and he begins the list by saying, that "in the first place are to be ranked the sacred four Gospels." These he specifies among "the scriptures, which, according to the ecclesiastical tradition, are true, genuine, and universally acknowledged." *

But, where there are so much better materials for an argument, I must not be understood to give any prominence to the attestation, however explicit and unexceptionable, afforded by a writer so late as Eusebius, to the antiquity and universality of the view which he upholds. With the single hint, that, on any supposition respecting the authorship of the Gospels, he did not live at a time more distant from their composition, than we from that of the "Faery Queen" of Spenser, or of some of the plays of Shakspeare, and that we should hardly be disposed to listen to any doubt respecting the established view of the origin of those works, I go back at once to an authority eighty years earlier. Origen, of Alexandria in Egypt, the most learned man of Christian antiquity, was born a hundred and fifty years after the crucifixion of Jesus, and lived till the age of seventy. In his voluminous writings the Scriptures are so often quoted, that the learned editor of the first critical edition of the New Testament, Dr. Mill, finds cause to say, "if we had all his works remaining, we should have before us almost the whole text of the Bible." † Some of his writings are lost;

* *Hist. Eccles.* Lib. iii. cap. 24, (edit. Cantab. p. 117.)

† *Prolegomena in Nov. Test.* n. 672. p. 64.

some are extant only in a Latin translation; but those which still survive in the original Greek contain quotations from the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, so numerous that, if those books were lost, the works of Origen alone would almost afford the materials for a complete restoration of them. A fragment of one of his treatises, preserved by Eusebius, contains a catalogue of the sacred books, in which he says; "I have learned by tradition concerning the four Gospels, which alone are received without dispute by the whole church of God under heaven. The first was written by Matthew, once a publican, afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ; . . . . . the second is that according to Mark; . . . . . the third is that according to Luke; . . . . . lastly, that according to John."* Elsewhere he says, "There are four Gospels, which are, as it were, the elements of the faith of the church, of which elements the whole world, that is reconciled to God by Christ, consists;"† and his detailed comments upon the books now in our hands, under those names, furnish the decisive answer to any question which might be raised respecting the writings he had here in view.

I do not pause upon this father, weighty and excellent as his testimony is, because I am hastening to that which is better. The master of Origen was Clement, of Alexandria, in Egypt. He too

* Euseb. *Hist. Ecc.* Lib. vi. cap. 25, (p. 290.)

† *Comment. in Johan.*, Tom. I. § 6, (Opp. Vol. IV. p. 5, edit. Delarue.)

was a learned man, and wrote a great number of books. He flourished in the latter part of the second century, and the beginning of the third, in the reigns of Severus, and his son Antoninus Caracalla; that is, between the years 192 and 217 of our era. The exact time of his death is not known. One modern critic of note has dated it as late as the year 220;* but, according to the general opinion, it took place earlier. He was a person of great influence in the church, from his abilities and character, and no one of the time possessed better means of information; though the private information of any one, I wish it may be constantly remembered, is not what I am relying upon, but testimony to a universal persuasion of the day, a thing of vastly more importance.

In the works of Clement, still extant, he gives very numerous quotations from the four Gospels, citing them, as a Christian writer of our time would do, as writings of decisive authority. He, like Eusebius in the passage which I lately read, takes occasion to speak of the order in which he understood them to have been composed. "The Gospels containing the genealogies," says he, [that is, those of Matthew and Luke,] "were written first." Then he goes on to give an account of the occasion of the production of that of Mark. "And, in the last place," he says, "John, ... being urged by his friends, and divinely moved by the Spirit,

* Du Pin. See Lardner, *Credibility of the Gospel History*, Part II. chap. 22. (*Works*, Vol. I. p. 392, 4to edition.)

composed a spiritual Gospel."* Of these four, then, and neither more nor fewer, he understood the evangelical record to consist; and the exclusive authority, which he and other Christians of his day regarded them as possessing, is perfectly indicated, when, in answer to certain persons, who had undertaken to defend an opinion by an alleged declaration of Christ, he says; "We have not that declaration in the four Gospels, which have been handed down to us."† "Which have been *handed down;*" here is the authority, on which they were received. "*We have not that declaration* in the four Gospels;" if this was any answer, then they were of authority with Christians, and no others were. "The *four Gospels;*" this was their number, then; there were no more nor fewer authoritative records of the life and ministry of Jesus; and what four records they were, the passage which I first quoted, as well as many others which might be produced, explains.

Contemporaneously with Clement in Alexandria, lived Tertullian in Carthage. He was a person of good education, and of great learning and abilities. He was born about the year 150, or one hundred and twenty years after Christ's crucifixion, and lived to a very advanced age.‡ He testifies, in the most express terms, to the universal recep-

* This passage from the lost work of Clement, entitled Ὑποτυπώσεις, or *Institutions*, is preserved by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* Lib. vi. cap. 14, (pp. 273, 274.)

† *Stromata*, Lib. iii, (p. 465. edit. Sylburgii.)

‡ See *Lardner*, ubi supra, cap. 27, (p. 416.)

tion of the four Gospels by the Christians of his day, as the works of the persons to whom they are now ascribed, and, consequently, as authoritative records of the ministry of Jesus; a reception which he traces to uninterrupted tradition in the churches gathered by the labors of the apostles themselves. He has quoted from every chapter in Matthew, Luke, and John, and from most of them frequently; and, indeed, I may remark by the way, that he has cited so often from all parts of the New Testament, as to lead the cautious Lardner to say; "There are, perhaps, more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Christian author, than of all the works of Cicero, though of so uncommon excellence for thought and style, in the writers of all characters for several ages."

"In the first place," he says, "we lay this down for a certain truth, that the evangelical document had, for its authors, apostles, to whom the work of publishing the Gospel was committed by the Lord himself. And, if a part also of these writers were apostolical men, still they were not alone, but men connected with the apostles, and followers of them. . . . . Among apostles, John and Matthew teach us the faith. Among apostolical men, Luke and Mark refresh it."* "In a word," says he, "if it be certain, that that is most genuine which is most ancient, that most ancient which is from

* *Adversus Marcion.* Lib. iv. cap. 2, (p. 414. edit. Rigaltii.)

the beginning, and that from the beginning, which is from the apostles, in like manner it will be also certain, that that was delivered from the apostles, which is held sacred in the churches of the apostles."* Speaking of the Gospel of St. Luke in particular, he says; "I affirm, that, not in those churches only which are apostolical [that is, founded by the personal labors of apostles], but in all that have fellowship with them in the same faith, has that Gospel of Luke which we so zealously maintain, been received from its first publication." And presently he adds; "The same authority of the apostolical churches will support the other Gospels, which we have from them conformably to their copies."†

Contemporaneously with Tertullian of Carthage and Clement of Alexandria, but having some years' precedency of both, lived Irenæus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul. Some have placed his birth as early as the year 97 of our era, that is, within the lifetime of St. John, though the better opinion assigns it to a later time; there is little question as to his death having taken place, at an advanced age, in or about the year 202.‡ A very interesting fact in relation to this father is, that he had enjoyed the personal acquaintance and instructions of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who was himself a disciple of St. John. As to the communication of knowledge on the subject, he was precisely at the same

* *Advers. Marcion.* Lib. iv. cap. 5, (p. 415.) † Ibid.
‡ See Lardner, ubi supra, p. 363.

remove from the first preaching of Christianity, that we, now on the stage, are from the war of the American Revolution; that is, he had conversed with those, who had themselves conversed with spectators of, and actors in, that series of events.

Tertullian speaks of him as one of the most considerable writers of the Christian church; but, though there are fragments of others of his works, only one remains entire. It is entitled "A Treatise against Heretics," and its design of course led him to speak in the name of the body of believers, whose views he was defending. His quotations from the four Gospels have been collected by a modern critic,* and fill about eleven closely printed folio columns. He ascribes these books explicitly to the writers whose names they now bear. Of their authority he speaks as follows; "We have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others, than those by whom the Gospel has been brought to us; which Gospel they first preached, and afterwards by the will of God committed to writing, that it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith. . . . . For, after our Lord had risen from the dead, and they [the apostles] were endued from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace,

* Massuet, in his edition of this father.

having all of them, and every one alike, the gospel of God. Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome, and founding a church there. And, after their departure, Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter; and Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, he likewise published a Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia. And all these have delivered to us, that there is one God, the maker of the heaven and the earth, declared by the Law and the Prophets, and one Christ, the son of God. And he who does not assent to them, despiseth indeed those who knew the mind of the Lord, and he despiseth also Christ himself, the Lord, and he despiseth likewise the Father." * In another passage, Irenæus treats of reasons why there could not be either more or fewer than four Gospels.† The reasons are fanciful and unsatisfactory, but they show incontestably the notoriousness of the fact to which they relate. And yet elsewhere he gives descriptions of four Gospels, with abundant and very interesting indications of their design and contents.‡

As an advocate of the genuineness of the records

* *Adv. Hæres.* Lib. iii. cap. 1, (pp. 198, 199, edit. Grabe.)

† Ibid. Lib. iii. cap. 11, (pp. 214, *et seq.*)

‡ *Opp.* Ibid. Lib. iii. cap. 11, (pp. 217, 218;) cap. 14, (p. 235.) Frag. p. 471.

of the ministry of Jesus, I should be perfectly content to stop here. I shall presently allude to earlier evidence, which I am myself persuaded belongs to the case, and is also of the greatest weight in it. But part of that earlier evidence has been contested, and thus, in fact, however unreasonably, has had a degree of uncertainty thrown over it in minds which have not themselves had opportunity to go into the inquiry. That which I have as yet produced is not contested. Nothing of the kind can be more unquestionable, than that persons altogether competent to speak to such a point, — Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement, at the end of the second century from the birth of Christ, to say nothing of Origen a little later, — have given the testimony of which I have presented specimens. The fact that they have given this testimony is one which stands and may be reasoned from, on the ground of universal consent; the consent of persons unfavorable as well as favorable to the conclusion which we Christians deduce from it. And to what does this testimony of theirs relate? Does it relate merely to their own conviction upon a point disputed in their time? Not at all. Their sense upon a disputed point would not be without value. But in a matter of such consequence we desire something better. We want, if we may have it, their testimony to a point, undisputed in their time; and that better evidence they give us. They testify to the notoriety of a fact, which, if existing at all, was of its nature so notorious, that, if it did not exist,

it is impossible that it should be asserted, I do not say by a person of conscientious purpose, but by a person of sane mind. What we quote these writers for, I repeat it, is not to show their private opinion respecting the authorship of our four Gospels. It is supposable that they might have entertained an erroneous opinion on this subject. We do not quote them to prove directly the fact that Matthew and the rest were authors of those books. This they were not in a condition to assert of their personal knowledge. We quote them to establish something which was within their personal knowledge. Living as they did at the same time in different parts of the world, they are our witnesses to the simple fact, that, at that early time, in all parts of the Church, wherever established in the world, these books were received as the foundation of the faith, and were attributed to the writers whose names they now bear.

Here, then, is a fact, which may be taken as indisputable. It is a fact to be explained. It is itself an effect; an effect of something; an effect which must have had a cause. There is one cause perfectly adequate to explain it; *the actual opinion was a correct opinion.* If we assign the Gospels to their true authors, that of John was probably written about thirty years later than the rest. At a period, then, which was distant from the composition of these several books, provided they are genuine, from about one hundred to about one hundred and thirty years, and a period considerably less dis-

tant than this from their composition, provided they are spurious (for no one would undertake or could carry through such a fraud during the lifetime of the putative author), the four Gospels were actually attributed to the persons called the Four Evangelists, by a common consent of the Church. That Church, the community of disciples scattered throughout the earth, at the end of the second century was a very numerous body. It has been computed, that, at that period, it amounted to not less than three millions of persons;* and this, there are the best reasons for believing, is a very moderate estimate. But, though an interesting fact, the number of disciples is not a fact essential to the argument. Wherever there were disciples, these were their accredited documents. Wherever fellowship in the faith was claimed, these were the title-deeds. The churches had suffered grievous oppressions and cruelties. Their condition was now exceedingly insecure, and presently the demon of persecution was again to be unchained against them in tenfold fury. They were nerved to bear all they did bear, by the conviction that what they read in these books came to them on good authority, and was true; and that accordingly their brave perseverance here was laying up for them a secure treasure in heaven. Had they not undoubtingly entertained this conviction, to take the course they did take would have been the mere extravagance of desperate folly.

*Norton's *Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels*, p. 49.

Is it possible to suppose that they entertained the conviction, but entertained it erroneously? I ask, whether to imagine this does not argue an incredibly easy credulity, a credulity not to be surpassed by any thing which can be charged on the most feeble-minded believer? Let us take care not to lose sight of the length of time, which this error, if it were one, had had to grow up in. When one speaks of an established consent of a community respecting some alleged historical fact of this nature, he does not speak of something which began to-day, or yesterday, or last year. When these writers testify to the consent of the Christian community in respect to the received opinion of the origin of the Gospels, we hazard nothing in saying, that their direct testimony to the existence of that consent, as a fact, ought to be taken as relating to a time long enough previous to the time when they wrote, to establish the existence of the fact at a period as early as within a hundred years from the time when the earliest Gospel was understood to have been written. Now it is about a hundred and twenty-five years since Pope published his translation of the "Iliad," and a little more than that time since Addison and others gave to the world the series of essays in the "Spectator." Of what concern is it to us, who translated the "Iliad," or who wrote the papers in the "Spectator," compared with what it was to the Christians of the second century, who wrote the Gospels; and yet would it be possible for any sophistry to shake

our faith in the truth of the information which the intervening generations, or rather I should say, the intervening generation, has transmitted to us concerning the authorship of those writings?

Or would it make any difference in our opinion upon this point, had the writings happened to be historical, and to contain matter which we were indisposed to credit? Should we not still find ourselves compelled to say, that the relations were at least genuine as to their authorship, whether true or untrue in point of statement? Let us seek for some familiar instances to illustrate this. It is a little more than a century since the well-known writer De Foe composed, for a particular purpose, an account of an apparition, which he meant should be received for true by any whom its extraordinary appearance of naturalness, the product of the highest art, might impose upon. No case can be stronger than this. Nobody now believes the story, but neither, on the other hand, does any one doubt who wrote the book. It is four hundred years since Mandeville published his marvellous experiences in foreign travel. But they who disbelieve his narrative do not therein find any justification for denying it to be his work. And so, only for much stronger reasons, should it be in the instance before us. If there are objections to the truth of the record, let them be freely and searchingly examined, upon their merits. But the truth of the record is one thing; its genuineness is another. Its genuineness, in view of the facts

which have been already presented, I feel authorized to say, that there is no color for disputing. Its truth is an ulterior question, to which, when its genuineness has been sufficiently considered, we are presently to proceed.

A word or two only more before I pass from these writers, though there is abundance of obvious remark upon their testimony, which my limits compel me to suppress. I have spoken of one of them, Irenæus, as having, according to his own account,* been a hearer of Polycarp, who had conversed with St. John. This is singly an interesting fact, but it is vastly more interesting as the representative of a class of facts. If he knew one person, whom he mentions, who had himself conversed with an apostle, for the same reason he may have known some or many others of the one intervening generation, whom he has no occasion to mention. And if he knew one or several persons thus circumstanced, so may numbers of others, his contemporaries, in whose name he speaks, for whose opinion he vouches as coinciding with his own, have done the same. "Others, his contemporaries," I say, "in whose name he speaks;" for let it be constantly borne in mind, that he, and the other writers of his time whom I have quoted, give their testimony to a conviction entertained by the numerous community to which they belonged, every member of which was interested as

* *Opp.* Lib. iii. cap. 3, (p. 203.)

much as themselves to know the truth, and many members of which, it is likely, possessed equally good means of information.

It ought to be observed too, though I cannot dwell on the remark, that the manner in which these writers quote from the Gospels, when engaged in the exposition or enforcement of Christian doctrine, is such as perfectly to correspond with what they say of the authority ascribed to them by the community of believers. They quote them always as authoritative books, as books decisive of any question they touch. Once more; the suggestion may perhaps as well find place here as any where, that, if the Gospels had been supposititious works, they would hardly have been furnished with the names they bear. More conspicuous authors would have been feigned for all but one of them. Mark and Luke were not so much as apostles, and Matthew, independently of his relation to the book which goes by his name, was one of the least considerable of that company.

I have said, that I consider the evidence already produced to be abundantly sufficient to establish the important point before us, of the genuineness of the evangelical records. I consider it to be sufficient, because of its decisive weight, independently viewed, and because, supposing the books to have had the origin which I am maintaining, it is precisely the evidence, and all the evidence, of that fact, which we could expect to possess. Let me attempt briefly to illustrate this last observation.

We have traced the existence of that common consent upon the subject, which must itself have had an earlier cause, back to the second generation after the time of those to whom the writings are ascribed. Any earlier direct evidence to this point must of course come from the generation to which the evangelists belonged, or from the generation immediately succeeding it.

Should we expect to find it proceeding from the very age of the evangelists, supposing any writings of contemporaries of theirs to be now extant? No; it is not the habit of writers to treat of works of their own age in this point of view. How should I be employed, for instance, in testifying to the genuineness of Scott's "Life of Napoleon," or Prescott's "History of Ferdinand and Isabella," or Moore's "Life of Byron," as having proceeded from the writers whose names they bear? Besides, it is not certain, that, independently of the New Testament collection, there now exists a single writing from a Christian who lived in the apostolic age. Nor can this be wondered at; for, on the one hand, it was a time of too much activity, exposure, and struggle in the church, to admit of much writing being done by any of the distinguished disciples; and, on the other, the paramount interest and authority, with Christians, of the writings of the New Testament themselves, would seem inevitably to doom all others, which might be produced during the same period, to an obscure and short life.

We look then, next, to the generation immediately succeeding the apostles, and intervening between their time and that to which the testimony already quoted relates. That, too, was a busy, anxious, unsettled period, when, with the labor of evangelizing the nations on their hands, and with the cross and the stake perpetually in their view, Christians cannot be supposed to have found much time applicable to the tasks of the closet; and, in fact, from this age, too, scarcely any writing of theirs, with one important exception which I am presently to notice, has descended to our day. But suppose it had been otherwise. Suppose we had abundant literary remains of that time. How much evidence could we reasonably have expected from them, bearing on the point in hand? I ask myself the question, and I recur to a simple illustration for the best form of answer. We, who are in middle life at this time, stand in the same relation to the actors in the war of the American Revolution, that the men of the generation of which we are now speaking sustained to the apostles and evangelists and other early preachers of our faith. Persons whom I address, have had opportunities of conversing with the second President of the United States, and of hearing from his lips references to events now long past, but to which he was a party, events which are also mentioned in his published writings. I ask whether, if, in conversation or writing, we had now occasion to mention any of those events, it would be natural for us to refer to

the books which record them, either by expressly declaring the origin and authority of those books, or even by so much as quoting them?

Would it not be far more natural, for us now on the stage, to treat those events as perfectly notorious, as to us they are, without the mention of any authority; or, if we had occasion to appeal to authority at all, would it not on the whole be more natural for us to refer to the oral testimony of those with whom we had conversed, than to the written testimony, however well known to us and trusted by us, of the same individuals? I say, under common circumstances, for all common occasions, would it not be so? If we were writing or speaking controversially, and the accuracy of our information or of our recollection were called in question, the case would then be altered. It might then become necessary or convenient to appeal to something written. But what I submit is, that, except under peculiar circumstances, such forms of reference would not be called for, and would not most naturally be used; the consequence of which would be, that such forms of reference, if searched for in our writings by men of later times, would be sought in vain; and this, while the conviction of our own minds respecting the genuineness of those books had been perfectly undoubting. And what I have described was precisely the position of the age next succeeding that of the evangelists, in relation to their works.

I have remarked upon the fact, that Christian

antiquity has transmitted to us scarcely any literary remains of the age intervening between that of the evangelists and that from which I have already quoted so largely. There is one important exception to this general remark. Justin Martyr, so called from the manner of his death at Rome, in or about the year 165 of our era, was born at Flavia Neapolis, formerly Sychem, in Samaria, as early or earlier than the year 90, according to some critics, and according to others some few years later. He became a convert to Christianity after arriving at mature age, and wrote, says Eusebius, "a great number of very useful works."* The principal were his two "Apologies," and his "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew." The larger Apology is still extant entire; and the other works just mentioned, with the exception of some parts. Justin is constantly mentioned by the later writers with all tokens of veneration. It has been common, in treatises on the Christian evidences, to refer to quotations from our four Gospels in his still extant works; and a copious selection from them may be seen in Dr. Lardner's "Credibility of the Gospel History," the great storehouse of ancient authorities on this subject. Lardner sums up his evidence as follows.

"Justin has numerous quotations of our Gospels, except that of St. Mark, which he has seldom quoted. He quotes them, as containing authentic

* *Hist. Eccles.* Lib. iv. cap. 18.

accounts of Jesus Christ, and his doctrine. He speaks of memoirs, or records, written by 'apostles' and 'their companions;' plainly meaning the apostles and evangelists, Matthew and John; and, by companions or disciples of apostles, Mark and Luke. These Gospels were read and expounded in the solemn assemblies of the Christians, as the books of the Old Testament were; and as they had been before in the Jewish synagogues. . . . . This reading of the Gospels he mentions in his first Apology to Antoninus Pius. He must have been well assured of the truth of what he says. . . . . If it had not been a general practice, or had obtained in some few places only, he must have spoken more cautiously, and made use of some limitations and exceptions. For if there were Christian churches in which the 'memoirs,' he speaks of were not read, upon inquiry made by the emperor, or his order, he had run the hazard of being convicted of a design to impose upon the majesty of the Roman empire; and that, not in an affair incidentally mentioned, but in the conduct and worship of his own people, concerning whom he professed to give the justest information. The general reading of the Gospels, as a part of divine worship, at that time, about the year 160, or not very long after, is not only a proof, that they were well known, and allowed to be genuine, but also that they were in the highest esteem. These Gospels were not concealed. Justin appeals to them in the most public manner, and

they were open to all the world, and read by Jews and others."*

The correctness of this representation has, however, lately been brought into dispute by some of that large class of German writers, who canvass every thing, and settle nothing. In respect to two things, they have right on their side; namely, that, in making his quotations from what he calls *memoirs* of, or by, the Apostles, Justin nowhere expressly names our four evangelists as the authors of those memoirs; and that there is not a strict verbal coincidence between his quotations, and the corresponding passages in our Gospels. This interesting question has accordingly been thoroughly reconsidered by our countryman, Mr. Norton, in part of his recent work, entitled "Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels," a work which, for ability and learning, ranks with the highest that the age has produced, and with the most valuable contributions ever made to the science of Christian evidences. It is impossible for me here to give a full account of an argument, necessarily running so much into detail; and I also prefer to rely, for the present purpose, on facts not only rightfully, but actually, beyond the reach of question. But I conceive the work I have mentioned to have conclusively proved, that, considering who they were whom Justin was addressing in his writings, his references to the evangelical

* *Credibility*, &c., Part. II. chap. x. § 9; ubi supra, p. 349.

histories, by the title he has used, rather than by a specification of their respective writers, supposing him to have attributed them to Matthew and the rest, was altogether the most natural and appropriate mode of reference; that his description of the books as memoirs "composed by apostles of Christ and their companions," which more particular language he has also used, has, under the circumstances, an exceedingly precise conformity to the fact of their origin, as received by others; that the general form of the title, commonly employed by him, corresponds to the manner in which he has also quoted the Apocalypse, a book which he has referred in express terms to St. John; that, as to the verbal exactness of quotations, Justin has made them in the same way as other fathers who undoubtedly attributed the books to their now reputed authors,—that is, with a degree of freedom, except when, quotations being introduced in controversy or for comment, precision was essential to the argument; that no peculiar punctilious accuracy was to be looked for from Justin in this respect, as is shown by his manner of quoting, in various parts of his works, from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, in respect to which we cannot be mistaken, because we have both in our hands, and can compare his citations with the original; that he has repeatedly varied from himself, in different references to the same passage of the "memoirs," as he calls them, which could not be, if a verbal accuracy

of quotation had been his habit;—and that, on the other hand, Justin must have used our present Gospels, because of the actual agreement in thoughts and words between his quotations and passages in those books, and the great improbability that they should be taken from any other book; because of the manner in which, in different places, he mentions and describes the books which he quotes; because in no subsequent writer is there any intimation that Justin used other authorities than these, as, considering the estimation enjoyed by him, there could scarcely fail to be, had he done so; because the terms which he applies to the high authority, and general reception among Christians, of the books quoted by him, answer to those used presently after by Irenæus, in respect to our Gospels; and because it is impossible that such books as Justin used could have disappeared and been forgotten immediately after he wrote, as was the case, unless we understand them to have been the same that were received in the next generation, and are now in our hands.

By this abstract, I give but a faint idea of an admirable discussion, which those who hear me will find the greatest satisfaction and advantage in examining for themselves. Indeed, I have had to aim at the closest practicable condensation of other parts of the argument, which I regard as still more important, and cannot but fear that, after all, it has suffered injustice, from the limits to which I am unavoidably confined. As to Christian

writers earlier than Justin, there are preserved in the "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius* valuable quotations from a now lost work by one of them, Papias, bishop of Hieropolis in Syria, who flourished about the year 116. In those passages, Papias speaks particularly of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, affirming them to have been written by those individuals, showing his sense of their authority by applying to them the title of *oracles*, and declaring Mark's Gospel to have been a record of the oral narrations of Peter. There is also extant a small number of compositions, bearing the names of different *apostolical fathers*, as they are called, or fathers contemporary with the apostles; but the genuineness of them all has been denied, and it is altogether probable that all except two, namely, an epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthian church, and an epistle of Polycarp of Smyrna to that of Philippi, are spurious productions of later times. In both those books, language of Jesus is quoted, corresponding with what he is recorded to have used by Matthew and Luke; but there are no sufficient means of deciding the question, whether they meant to quote from those Gospels, or to recite the same words orally communicated to them by other persons, who had heard them from Jesus's own lips. Irenæus, indeed, says,† that he had heard Polycarp repeat

* *Hist. Eccles.* Lib. iii. cap. 39.

† In a fragment of an epistle to Florinus, preserved by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* Lib. v. cap. 20.

conversations of John, and of others who had seen the Lord, concerning the miracles and doctrine of Jesus, all of which were conformable to the Gospels; and what Polycarp was thus in the habit of repeating in conversation on John's spoken authority, it is very probable that he may have also set down in writing.

There is one other important fact belonging to this argument, to which I ought not to omit making a passing allusion, though I am to present it more fully at a later stage of the discussion. The controversy upon the evidences of our religion is no modern dispute. Its divine origin was denied in the early ages, by writers capable of seeing and seizing on every possible advantage against it. And what is very remarkable is, that in no instance have those writers denied the genuineness of the Gospel records, as it is impossible that they should have failed to do, if there had been any fair color for such a denial. Celsus, a heathen philosopher, wrote against Christianity about a hundred years after the time to which the Gospels are referred. The work of Celsus is lost. We know it from the reply of Origen, who, in the course of his confutation, quoted him largely. But that Origen has not suppressed any material argument of his adversary, is not only to be inferred from his own protestations, but much more from the fact that the objections which he quotes, though never very forcible, are not seldom more so than his own reply. Not only, as I have said, does Celsus never deny the

authenticity of the books understood by him to contain the religion of Christians, but he quotes them very freely, in a manner which satisfactorily identifies those books with the Gospels now in our hands. A remark which has been made is not too strong, that, in the remains of his work, "we have, in a manner, the whole history of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels."* He alludes to the accounts of Jesus's miraculous birth, of his baptism and temptation, of the occupation of his reputed father, of his miracles, of his prophecies, of his discourses, of his unfavorable reception by the Jews, of his betrayal by Judas and denial by Peter, of the circumstances of his apprehension, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection, specifying, as to the last event, which is very remarkable, the mention in one history of one angel at the sepulchre, and in another of two, as we now actually have it, — and of various other particulars, just as these are now found in our Gospels.† After remarking upon several such passages, he says, "These things are from your own books, for we need no other testimony. Thus you fall by your own hands." In no instance, on the other hand, does he remark upon any thing related respecting Christ, and believed by Christians, which is not now actually found in these books; nor does Origen, in his reply, even the most remotely intimate, that Celsus derived his knowledge of the faith of Christians from any other

* Lardner, *Credibility*, &c. Part II. chap. 18, § 12. (Vol. IV. p. 144.)
† Ibid. Part II. chap. 18. (Vol. IV. p. 113 *et seq.*)

source than that on which, as we have seen, the faith of Origen himself reposed.

Essentially the same remarks, that have been made concerning Celsus, are applicable to Porphyry and the Emperor Julian, the former of whom wrote against our religion in the third century, and the latter in the fourth. While the animadversions of both are very precisely directed against matter contained in our present Gospels, in a way to show that they understood those records to be identified with the religion in the minds of believers, and while they give no hint that any history, except these, was understood by them as of authority with Christians, there is no appearance whatever, in what is preserved of their arguments, of their having thought of calling in question the genuineness of the books. In the case of Porphyry this is the more observable, as his perception of the value of such an argument, and his readiness to resort to it, if there were any thing to give plausibility to the attempt, are shown by his having actually called in question the authenticity of the book of Daniel. And Julian even expressly states the early date of the evangelical records, and calls them by the names which now they bear.

I have thus given an imperfect sketch of the external evidence for the genuineness of the records of the ministry of Jesus. My next Lecture will treat of the internal evidence for their genuineness, and of their integrity.

LECTURE V.

AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

[CONTINUED.]

In presenting, in my last Lecture, the external evidence for the genuineness of the evangelical records, I argued, that, considering what that evidence is, its force is in no degree impaired by the circumstance, that the records contain a miraculous history. But I ought not to leave this part of the subject without presenting a still stronger statement. Not only does not the miraculous character of the narrative weaken the evidence produced for the genuineness of the records that contain it; it actually adds to that evidence a peculiar force.

Does this proposition seem to any one a paradox? I ask him to weigh it. We have seen that, at an early time after the first preaching of Christianity, and the earliest from which any information has reached us relating to the subject, there existed in the church, wherever established, a persuasion that these writings were genuine. Now I say, that this actually existing persuasion is better evidence to us,

considering that the writings testified to what is so extraordinary, than it would have been, had they related only common events. And why? Because, had they related only common events, they might have been received as genuine with a too easy faith. Seeing that there was no antecedent presumption against them, that they told of nothing but what, at any time and under any circumstances, was likely to have happened, they might have slidden into reception and credit without any particular examination into their history. But when the case was the opposite of this, when their contents were such as to startle belief, when a strong presumption against their credibility was first to be overcome, it is impossible that the men of the earliest ages should have acknowledged their genuineness, unless that genuineness had first been abundantly proved to the satisfaction of their minds.

The fact of their acknowledgment accordingly stands as the token and expression of much more evidence, then existing, than under common circumstances it would import. Nor is even this the whole strength of the case. The persuasion of which we speak, to have been yielded at all, must have been extorted by ample proof, not only because the books to which it related contained what was extraordinary, but because they contained what, as soon as received, summoned him who so received it to costly sacrifices. There must have been complete evidence to enforce such assent, because whoever accepted these books for genuine

and true, accepted them at his peril. Believing their genuineness and truth, he immediately became one of that community, who were objects of bitter persecution to the unconverted world. I do not doubt, to be sure, that many who entertained the opinion, at the time to which the testimony I have produced directly relates, had been educated in Christianity. But this is only carrying back the application of the remark now made, a single step. The parents who had so educated them had been converts from Judaism or heathenism, who must themselves have been convinced, through the experience which I have indicated, before they numbered themselves with the much abused sect; and besides, there was of course nothing to prevent any child of Christian parents from seeking personal security and ease in apostasy, provided his personal convictions were not strong enough to sustain him where he stood. But while many of the age, from which our direct testimonies have been sought, may have been reared in the Christian faith, with very many it was otherwise. In fact, of the early writers from whom I lately quoted, Justin is known from his own particular account, to have been converted to Christianity at full age, and the same is probably true of Tertullian and Clement; while Justin certainly, and Papias and Irenæus probably, suffered martyrdom for the faith, and Origen, in the Decian persecution,* was exposed to tortures for it,

* See Lardner, *Credibility*, &c. Part II. chap. 10, 17, 22, 27, 38. (Vol. I. pp. 341, 363, 392, 416, 524.)

though he did not die under the infliction. In truth, so far from regarding their Christian belief as unfavorably affecting their testimony to the genuineness of the records, we ought in all reason to regard that belief as fortifying their testimony in a most material manner. They, — and the same was true of all in whose names they spoke, that is, of the church at large, — did not believe the genuineness of these records, because they believed in Christianity; they believed in Christianity, on the contrary, because they believed the genuineness and truth of these records. The belief of this latter point, could not have been lightly taken up under such discouragements; and the fact that, in the face of such discouragements, it was taken up, affords the most convincing proof that it was known to rest on sufficient grounds. So far from being interested witnesses, they were greatly interested, so far as worldly motives were concerned, to give their testimony the other way.

In the first Lecture of this course, taking notice of the view of some who would disparage the external evidence for our religion, on the ground that it deals in matters of history, which, in order to their thorough investigation, require the habits of a scholar's life, I replied in a course of remark to the following effect; that confidence in the representations of others, who have had opportunity for careful examination of a subject, and on whose integrity and capacity reliance is reposed, is, for such as have not had this opportunity, a reason-

able principle of belief, and is habitually recognised as such by men's daily practice in all the important pursuits and occasions of life. I added, and proceeded to show by some illustrations, that as far as force should be allowed to the objection, it would not avail for the purpose for which it was produced, whenever produced by believers in our religion, namely, that of establishing a preference of the internal evidence over the external; inasmuch as the former, as well as the latter, comes under the jurisdiction of the divinely established and manifestly reasonable rule, that, as far as a man is ignorant, he cannot have such minute personal satisfaction upon a point as he would if he were knowing, and that he, who for any reason, cannot or does not inform himself, must so far depend for his persuasions, and may reasonably depend, on the results of those who can and do, and whom, from what is obvious to him of their character and pursuits, he perceives to be worthy of trust. But, having maintained the abstract soundness of this principle, I ended by observing that its applicability to the subject we are now considering was liable to be over-estimated; that, in fact, occasion for much historical research arose only in respect to one point in the Christian evidences, namely, the genuineness of the Christian records; and that, when we came to consider it, we should see that even in respect to this, there was by no means so much as might be supposed, resting upon researches which only the learned can pursue.

The correctness of this latter remark we are now prepared to observe. The stress of the external evidence for the genuineness of the Gospels does not lie, as has been seen from the argument which I have submitted, on uncertain data, which erudite discussion is required to settle. The testimony of the three writers, at the end of the second century, from whom I quoted, is in no view, either of origin or interpretation, a matter of dispute; and, give us this for a basis, we dismiss henceforth the mere matter of learning, and enter on the argument, lately presented, of which one man of sound mind is as competent to estimate the force, as another. Here then is one particular, in which the fact under notice has been much overstated. Another, at which I hinted in the same argument, and of which I am now to give some illustration, is this; that, in that very portion of the argument in which the external evidence might, from its connexion with learned inquiry, be thought beyond the reach of personal scrutiny on the part of the majority of Christians, the internal evidence comes in to perform an especially important office.

In the first place, we find internal evidence, going directly to establish the genuineness of one of the Gospels, and indirectly, as will presently be shown, that of the rest, in the appearance of simplicity and frankness, the evident freedom from constraint, — the air of honesty and truth, in short, — which characterizes the writing. Every one is conscious of unavoidably placing great confidence

in these signs of trustworthiness. They are what determine judges and juries day by day. Now the striking extent to which the evangelical records are marked by these qualities, is matter of familiar observation. In addition to the general tone of candor and artlessness, which is a thing to be felt rather than described, I may take occasion to specify some instances, when I come, at the next stage of the investigation, to speak of the veracity of the evangelists. The subject connects itself rather with the truth of the histories, than with their genuineness, because it might be said, that, honest as the writers evidently were, this does not prove that they were the persons to whom the books have been ascribed. They might still have been other contemporaries of Jesus, and not Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; or they might even have been Christians of the next age, who recorded what they had heard and believed.

To the genuineness, however, of one of the Gospels, as I suggested, this argument does admit a direct application. It is that of John. The writer of John's Gospel, at the close of his book, after relating an incident which took place between Jesus, Peter, and another disciple, takes occasion to say, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things." And who was the disciple, who was a party to this conversation with Jesus and Peter, and is accordingly declared to be the writer of the book? If we look a little further back, we find him described as "the disci-

ple whom Jesus loved, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, 'Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?'"* Now, at the time here referred to, we gather from this writer, as well as the rest, that no one was present with Jesus but his twelve apostles. If, then, it so happened, that we were unable to fix the designation here used, so as to determine which of the twelve was intended by "the disciple whom Jesus loved," we should still have reached the material point, namely, that the writer meant to give himself out as one of the twelve immediate companions of the ministry of Jesus, and one especially dear to him. But there was no doubt, in antiquity, who was meant by this designation. It was John. Nor can there well be any doubt in our minds, particularly when we consider that it was to the same person, designated as the disciple whom he loved, that Jesus committed his mother on his cross.† Who it was that received that precious bequest,— under whose protection it was that the suffering mother of Jesus passed the years of her decline,— could not but be, in the primitive age, a fact of the greatest notoriety. So far then as we infer from characteristics of the structure and spirit of this composition, that its writer was honest, so far we necessarily conclude that he was the person whom he indicates himself to be; that he was not one who wrote merely at second hand, but one whose means of information concerning what he

* *John*, xxi. 20. † Ibid. xix. 26, 27.

undertakes to communicate to us were unsurpassed; — we conclude that he was the well-beloved John.

By a process having some analogy to this, we reach a similar conclusion respecting another Gospel, that of Luke; but part of the method of proof here involved I can do more than allude to, because it belongs to an argument, relating directly to a different part of the New Testament from what is now under consideration, and depending for its effect on a large induction of particulars. Many of my hearers are probably acquainted with that work of Dr. Paley, so admirable for the originality of its method, and still more for its perspicuous and cogent logic, entitled "Horæ Paulinæ." For those who are unacquainted with it, it is necessary that I should describe its plan in a few words, before proceeding as briefly to suggest an argument which it furnishes, bearing on one of the Gospels. In this work, in which Dr. Paley undertakes to prove the genuineness of the Acts of the Apostles and the thirteen Epistles ascribed to Paul, he assumes nothing whatever except the present existence of those writings. He takes them up as if they were drawn forth now for the first time from some obscure repository, and nothing had been known or told respecting their history; and then, by observing coincidences between them respectively, of a character certain and significant when observed, and at the same time so latent and casually occurring as absolutely to preclude the suspicion of design, he proceeds to show

the genuineness of the Epistles as written by St. Paul, and that of the Acts of the Apostles as the work of a companion of part of his travels, which companion antiquity, which cannot be supposed to have any reason but the truth for selecting one name rather than another, has uniformly asserted to be Luke.

My hearers will do well to examine that argument for themselves. In all literature a more beautiful specimen of clear and sagacious reasoning is probably not to be found; and it has repeatedly happened to me to hear persons of skeptical habits of mind avow that there was no escaping the conclusions of that book. But what I refer to it now for, is, to build on one of its conclusions, which themselves do not relate directly to the Gospels. The history, called the Acts of the Apostles, proved by that method of internal evidence to be genuine, is addressed to a certain Theophilus, and it begins with these words; "*The former treatise* have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandment unto the apostles whom he had chosen." If, then, the author of the Acts of the Apostles was Luke, the companion of Paul, the same Luke had previously written an account of what Jesus had done and taught. Now there is a treatise extant, answering precisely to this description, namely, the Gospel which antiquity actually ascribed to St.

Luke; we actually had at the beginning of it a sort of dedication to Theophilus, "It seemed good to me to write unto thee, most excellent Theophilus," and so on; a fact the more interesting, because the passage at the beginning of the Acts, while it speaks of a "former treatise," does not mention that it had been addressed to Theophilus, as doubtless it would have done, had it been a later interpolation, designed to provide the materials for the argument which I now am using; and, finally, the resemblance, in point of style, between the Acts and the Gospel ascribed to St. Luke, is so perfect as to forbid the supposition of their having had different origins.

In introducing the last two observations, relating each directly to the genuineness of one only of the Gospels, I observed that indirectly they had a connexion with that of the rest. This will be apparent, from the following consideration. If any one of the Gospels was genuine, it may be presumed, from the reason of the case, that it was forthwith extensively known to be genuine. Such a work from the hands of Luke or John was of too much importance, not to be speedily in wide circulation among the churches. Now I will not go so far as to say, that a person after the apostolical age would have been discouraged from the attempt to obtain credit for any supposititious work, resembling them in character, and ascribed, for instance, to Matthew or Mark, by the certainty, that the church, already in possession of what was of indisputable authority,

and knowing the proof on which its faith in that rested, would have demanded equal proof before it received his spurious production, — proof which, from the nature of the case, he would be unable to furnish. I will not insist on this, though, undoubtedly, there would be force in the remark. But what I urge is, that, taking as proved the previous existence of the Gospel either of Luke or John, it cannot be imagined, that, this Gospel being what it is, either of the other Gospels, being what they are, could have been the fraudulent production of a later time.

And I found this assertion on a certain character of the four Gospels, obvious to any one who compares them together. So compared, they are seen, — especially the first three, but the remark has application to all, — to contain repetitions of the same matter, sometimes running through long passages; they are found to present, on the other hand, a different selection and arrangement of matter; and, further, they exhibit occasional subordinate discrepancies of statement, — apparent discrepancies, at least, — which it has tasked the sagacity of criticism to reconcile. This class of facts, — as, if here were the place, it would be easy to show, — are sufficiently explained on the supposition that all the Gospels were productions of the persons to whom we ascribe them; but only on this supposition. A person who wrote in a later age, and knew that either the Gospel of John, or, especially, that that of Luke, was

received for genuine in the Church, could not have written either of the other Gospels, such as we possess them. Had he produced any work of the kind, it would have been one having either more or less resemblance than the narratives of Matthew and Mark actually have to the work already in credit and circulation; he would either have aimed, on the one hand, to give different matter, or else, on the other, to abridge, or enlarge upon, the already approved model; and, in particular, he would have taken care to avoid those apparent diversities of statement, which, relating to points however minute, are manifest to every reader, which actually exercised the ingenuity of the early fathers to account for them, and which, it must have been perfectly obvious beforehand, would prevent the reception of any book containing them, unless it could produce the most unexceptionable proof of authorship to sustain its credit. To give a single example; to me, as an expositor of the Christian scriptures, the genealogies of Jesus, given by Matthew and Luke, present no serious difficulty; but what forger of a pretended Gospel of Matthew, wishing to introduce his work to an authority similar to that already enjoyed by the Gospel of Luke, would begin it with a statement at first view so contradictory? No experiment at deception could be more unpromising than one so conducted; none could be surer of discomfiture.

There is another class of internal marks, presenting themselves to the attentive reader of the Gos-

pels, and bearing upon the question of their genuineness, which, however, I shall here do no more than allude to, because I shall have occasion to remark upon it more particularly hereafter. Considering, — I do not say, who the writers of these books were, for that is the question at issue, — but considering what were the possible capacities and accomplishments of any persons of that age, who, in Judea, or in any other country, could have been the writers, the character of Jesus, as they have depicted it, was utterly inconceivable by them, unless they had drawn from a living model. And further, they have severally placed him in different situations; they have recorded different parts of his conduct; they have represented him as uttering different discourses; and yet the perfect consistency of the representation as given by the whole, is as remarkable as the perfect originality of it as given by each one. I do not pursue the topic. I merely advert to it now in order to request, that, when I come to speak of it in corroboration of the truth of the history, it may be remembered that it has also a relation to the genuineness of the record. The men who could thus vividly and consistently delineate a character which had had no precedent, a character whose qualities, though combining the finished idea of the excellent and sublime, were yet so remote from established ideas of greatness, must not only have drawn from the life, but from a living reality with which they had individually been well acquainted. No transmitted impression of

the character of Jesus, however true, and however honestly reported, could have sufficed for the work which they have done. Every simple and spirited touch of their drawing shows that the artist's hand had been guided, that his heart had been fired, by the view of a present model. Nor is any essential qualification of this remark needed, in order to an application of it to the works of Mark and Luke. If they had never themselves listened to the instructions of Jesus, which we cannot affirm, they wrote as men might write, who lived among such as had seen and heard him, and faithfully recorded what these told. They wrote as men could not write, however well instructed, who lived under other circumstances. Their sketches have a boldness and life, such as, by the laws of the human mind, mark them for the production of no later time, than that on which the prototype had left its fresh stamp.

These are but hints, which I fear require more expansion, in order to produce their proper effect; and, if a fair appreciation of what they suggest implies some familiarity with the contents of Scripture, this is but a confirmation of the remark I have had occasion to make, that conviction upon the ground of the internal evidence is not to be so much more cheaply had, than upon that of the external, as seems sometimes to be supposed. There are other considerations, properly ranked in the department of internal evidence, which yet involve some acquaintance with related facts, supplied from

foreign sources. It is, in the first place, a thing of the utmost difficulty for an author, of whatever degree of ingenuity and learning, so to throw himself back in imagination into past time, so to emancipate himself from the influences of surrounding circumstances, and place his mind, in their stead, under the influences of another condition of things, as not, by some anachronism, to furnish means for the detection of his imposture. Every period has its own style of thought; its own customs of life; its own forms of society and occupation; its own prominent topics, suggested by passing events, by the characters, the hopes, the apprehensions, the discoveries of the time, or otherwise; and these are so constantly fluctuating, that even a short space of time bears its marks of distinction from those which precede or follow it. There is accordingly a twofold difficulty for him, who, writing in one age, would pass his work off for the production of another. He must escape the appearance of a consciousness of present things, which actually do occupy his mind and must insensibly give some shape to his thoughts; and he must assume the consciousness of a man of another time, with what success he may by the aid of diligent research into all particulars of the condition of that time; in which latter part of the attempt he is likely to fail, both by falling short on the one hand, and by overdoing and caricaturing on the other, so as to expose his design. And these difficulties are in fact of so intractable a character, that persons, versed in such

inquiries, address themselves to the examination of any work whose genuineness is under consideration, in great confidence, that, if spurious, they shall be able to discern the marks which determine it to be so.

In respect to the Gospels, the exposure to detection, had they been written at a later time than that to which the established opinion refers them, would, from certain peculiar circumstances, have been much more than commonly great. From the nature of their subject, they are full of allusions to circumstances, habits, opinions, pursuits, tastes, prejudices, expectations, controversies, of the place and period. And what is still more worthy of notice, the lifetime of most of the apostles was divided from the time, in which these writings, if supposititious, must have been produced, by a revolution which brought as great a change over all these things, as was perhaps possible to be effected within so short a space. In that interval, the Holy City had been sacked and razed to the ground, and the venerated temple of the ancient worship had shared the ruin. Not one stone of either remained upon another ; the plough had passed over the place where they stood. The proud Jew, prouder and sterner for the depression of his nation in the later times, who had but lately been debating in their streets and courts what should be done with the helpless Roman at that early day, when the conquering Messiah should come for the redemption of God's people, was now

a miserable outcast. Jerusalem and its glory, in short, such as they were, — and much they were to the vain-glorious Hebrew, who congratulated himself that he had Abraham to his father, and was never in bondage to any man, — had passed away like a dream. And to re-create that by-gone pageant; to re-people those not vacant only, but effaced, vanished streets; to make those perished crowds act over again their parts, in deed and word; to execute a fiction, which evidently could be carried through only by means of a marvellous fertility and elaborateness of art, — this is what must be supposed to have been accomplished, by any one who imagines the Gospels to be productions of a time later than that of the apostles of Jesus.

I will not affirm that this was not a possible achievement. I will but ask, whether, if accomplished, it would not have been such a miracle of skill, that the world has not seen its parallel. Yet not only has the most minute scrutiny into the Gospels failed to detect any incongruity with the circumstances of time, place, and alleged writer, but all investigation has terminated in bringing new coincidences of the kind to view. If I am affirming what would only be fully sustained by a large induction of minute particulars, still it is what, I believe, has not been doubted, with the exception of a use made of two or three texts, which, as soon as attention was drawn to them, were seen to admit of a satisfactory explanation. The argument on this subject, which, if pursued so as to do it

justice, must be extended to a great length, may be seen drawn out in numerous examples (some of them of the most curious description), the fruit of inquiries conducted with singular patience and good judgment, in the First Part of Dr. Lardner's "Credibility of the Gospel History."

Again; nothing can possibly be clearer to a person possessing some acquaintance with the Greek and Hebrew languages, and examining the Gospels in the original, than that their authors were persons to whom Hebrew was the vernacular tongue; * that is to say, that they were Jews. The words are Greek, but the idioms and modes of conception are most distinctly Hebrew. A born Greek could be prepared to write in this manner, only by the longest and most industrious application. It would be as if I should compose in English in the style, not of a Frenchman imperfectly acquainted with the English language, — this would be too favorable an analogy, for English and French are much more nearly allied than Greek and Hebrew, — but as some Oriental, a Hindoo for instance, might compose in English. Indeed, this style, of Greek words combined in Hebrew idioms, which naturally came into use among the Jews when the Greek was introduced among them by the Macedonian conquests, is so marked as to be known by a particular name, that of the *Hellenistic dialect.*

* The word *Hebrew* is here used in the same sense as in *Acts* xxi. 40. Strictly speaking, the language of Judea, at the New Testament period, was the dialect called *Syro-Chaldee.*

Now I cannot, from this fact, directly prove that the Gospels were written by Jews of the first century; for this dialect was still used by them in the second century and later. But the fact does prove, that they were written by Jews; and, having this origin, it is highly improbable that they would have been received by the Church in the second century, as we have already seen that they were received, if they had been productions of any later time than the apostolic age. I say, "it is highly improbable," on account of the well-known relations subsisting between the Jewish Christians and their Gentile associates, who in the second century constituted the great majority of the Church. We need look no further than the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul, to see that these two parties regarded each other with ill-suppressed distrust and dislike. Scarcely checked at first by the authority of apostles, no sooner was that authority removed, than the old jealousies broke out afresh; and, as all ecclesiastical history testifies, the disunion and estrangement were such as too nearly resembled what had existed in their unconverted state. The Gentile Christians, who were not only the most numerous, but the most learned and on every account the most considerable body, even stigmatized the others as heretics on account of their obstinate respect to their superseded Law. It is to the last degree unlikely, that, under such circumstances, the Gentile Christians should, in the second century, receive, from any Jewish source, books which they

did not know to have existed earlier, books which could not but offend a Greek taste by their style of composition, and books, moreover, which lent no countenance to doctrines adopted by the Gentile Christians of that time from the schools of philosophy to which many of them had before been attached. The sufficient and the necessary solution of these books, from Jewish hands, being in Gentile hands when we find them there, is this, that they were received before that early time when the unity of the church had been so invaded.

The subject of the genuineness of the Gospel narratives, establishing the point, from whom it is that we receive that testimony which is relied on to determine Christianity to be a supernatural revelation from God, I have now treated at as great length as is consistent with the claims of other parts of the general argument. I proceed to speak, with that brevity which is all that the case requires, of the integrity of the text of the Gospels, as they have descended from their writers to our day. It is of course supposable, that, after the books came from the hands of Matthew and the rest, containing nothing but what those evangelists were personally vouchers for, they may have fallen into careless or dishonest hands, and received additions or undergone corruptions, through which they would now present to us statements extraneous to, or different from, those which we have on the faith of the original writers. In that case, our past argument, intended to ascertain on whose

credit, if at all, we are to accept the Gospel narratives for true, would only serve us for a part, and, what is worse, for an uncertain part, since we might not be able to distinguish the genuine from the adventitious, the original substance from the foreign accretion. Our question, accordingly, now is, whether there is sufficient reason to believe that the Gospels have come down to us in a pure state, substantially as they stood on the autograph of their writers.

I say "substantially" as their writers prepared and left them; and this expression needs to be defined, and its relation to the question explained. We do not undertake to say,—nor, if it were so, would it be any thing material to the main argument,—that the extant text of the Gospels is perfectly immaculate. Until the discovery of the art of printing, four hundred years ago, that is, through the space of about fourteen centuries, they had, of course, to be transmitted in written copies; and it is obvious that an absolute exactness could not have been secured to every copy, by any other means than a perpetual miraculous supervision of every copyist. Let any one make the experiment for himself, by committing a composition to some careful friend to transcribe. It is not likely, if it be of any length, that it will come back to him an absolutely perfect representation of the original. An amanuensis, however intent on being faithful, is deceived by his eye, in reading the original wrong; or by his ear, if he write from the reading of

another, which was a method much in use; or he inadvertently omits, or repeats, a word or a passage, where successive words or passages have similar terminations or beginnings; or, having read a clause, he trusts his memory while he writes it, and erroneously puts down a word synonymous with the original, or of similar sound; or, observing that he has omitted a word or a phrase, he may subjoin it, rather than deface his copy by erasure to insert it in its place, and thus will produce a transposition. In the case of a book, should he see, upon the margin of that from which he is transcribing, some remark by a later hand, intended only for a comment, he may mistake it for an omission, accidentally made, and thus supplied by the previous transcriber; and so may proceed honestly, but erroneously, to introduce it into his own text. A scribe of bolder genius may even venture on the correction of what strike him as deviations from good grammar or rhetoric, presuming them to have been errors of the copyist whose work is before him; or he may introduce illustrations, or more full or satisfactory expressions, from some other similar record, or some different part of the same; or he may add a few words by way of explanation; or, for the supposed convenience of his readers, he may modernize words, especially proper names; or he may even go so far,—which, certainly, is very far, and not to be presumed to be often done, especially with books reverenced as having any thing of a sacred character,—as to change an

expression for some other, which, in consequence of convictions of his own, appears to him better to express the writer's views. These are occasions of error in each single case, and, of course, the list of errors may be expected to increase with each repetition of the process; that is, with each successive transcription.*

Now what is the check against such tendencies, which undoubtedly exist, though, in the case of authoritative books like the Scriptures, they may be supposed to take less effect than in others, on account of the greater reverence and care felt and applied by transcribers? The proper check is obviously to be found in a comparison of different copies together; for the kinds of negligence, and consequent exposures to error, will not be the same in different copyists; and so the faithfulness of many will preserve, in a given instance, what the inattention of one or a few has sacrificed; and accordingly the greater the number of independent copies, and especially of ancient copies, which may be compared, the more ample are the materials for ascertaining the original writing. In respect to the New Testament, these means are exceedingly abundant. Dr. Griesbach, in the preparation of his celebrated edition of the New Testament, which is generally regarded as the standard text, availed himself of a comparison of more than three hundred and fifty manuscript copies of the Gospels,

* See the author's *Academical Lectures on the Jewish Scriptures and Antiquities*, Vol. I. pp. 45, 46.

while in preparing the text of Terence, whose text is esteemed one of the most pure of all the Latin writers, not more than ten or twelve manuscripts were collated.

But the manuscript Greek copies are not the only resource for this purpose. There are two other independent sources of information respecting the original text of the Gospels, as well as of the rest of the New Testament, which one almost hesitates to call of inferior value to that already named. They are, the ancient versions into different languages, and the copious quotations in the writings of the ancient fathers of the Church. Of the versions, the Syriac, probably the best ever made, was also the earliest. Many writers refer it to the first century, and there is the best reason to believe that it should not be dated later than the second. Others, in great numbers, into other languages, followed in succeeding ages. As to quotations introduced for argument or illustration, in the works of the fathers, I remarked on a former occasion, that those found in Origen alone, at the beginning of the third century, are so numerous, that if our copies of the New Testament were lost, it is believed that they would restore it nearly or quite complete; and others of the numerous brotherhood furnish the same materials with a liberality more or less resembling his own.

Here then are three classes of testimonies to the condition of the text of our Gospels, as it existed in different ages in an unbroken line of succession

from the second century, a hundred years after the Gospels were composed, or, if we allow the highest antiquity claimed for the Syriac version, from the very age of their composition. These classes of testimony are independent of each other. The manuscript speaks for the readings of that copy from which its maker transcribed, and so back (with the exception of any errors that may have crept into it) to the author's autograph. The ancient translation, as far as it may be presumed to be correct, represents that still more ancient copy from which it was made. The quotation in an ancient writer, as far as circumstances lead us to believe that we may rely upon its accuracy, indicates to us the condition of the ancient copy quoted from, in respect to as much as the quotation includes. Nor only are these classes of testimony independent of each other, but equally the numerous individuals under each class. A manuscript prepared in Spain was not made from the same copy as another written in Ethiopia. Irenæus at Lyons did not take his quotations from the same volume that Clement was using in Alexandria. Nor has the author of the Arabic translation any connexion whatever with the author of the Gothic.

Now these testimonies, of different ages, of different descriptions, and furnished from widely remote parts of the world, are in the hands of modern scholars. There can be no mistake about them; we may examine them for ourselves. And what is the result of this examination? The

result, when first announced, created an uneasiness which a sober second thought converted into the most cordial satisfaction. When a hundred and thirty years ago Dr. Mill, who had collected authorities for the first critical edition of the Greek New Testament, was known to have observed in a survey of them thirty thousand *various readings*, as they are technically called, — that is, deviations from the printed text in common use, — the first feeling was naturally one of disquiet. It was naturally asked, If the authorities so differ, which is correct? or is any correct? and in short, where is the firm ground to stand upon? But Wetstein extended the inquiry over a wider field, and the increase of the number of various readings to about a hundred thousand was the fruit of his studies; and still later observations have probably added half as many more.

But long before this last step was taken, it had come to be distinctly seen, that the most beautiful attestation to the integrity of the New Testament records had thus been obtained. The effect of this vast process was perceived to be, not to unsettle, but to verify; for, in the immense number of various readings, there was almost literally nothing, that any one could dream of calling material, upon which the authorities conflicted. They had congregated from different quarters, different occasions of origin, different times; and with a unanimous voice they testified to one text as being the true one, with scarcely an exception, except for vari-

eties manifestly of no consequence whatever. I say "with scarcely an exception." Most of the one hundred and fifty thousand various readings, — produced, it is to be recollected, because it was intended to make their production an exercise of the most punctilious care, and because it was not for the mere critical editor, in his capacity of editor, to determine what was important and what not, — are such as, different spellings of the same word; the insertion or omission of a particle, where the meaning either way represented would be the same; the use of one word for another synonymous, as, "and Jesus went," for "and Jesus departed"; the transposition of one word with another, as, "then spake the apostles," for "then the apostles spake"; the addition of an immaterial word, as "and Jesus answered and said," for "and Jesus said."

When I characterize the great mass of various readings as entirely immaterial to the sense, I am speaking of nothing but what any one of my hearers can verify for himself. The exemplars respectively of the texts prepared with the least advantages and care, and with the greatest, are the *received edition*, so called, of the Greek New Testament, namely, that of the Elzevirs of Leyden, and the critical edition of Professor Griesbach; — the one scarcely prepared at all, but founded, in some sense, on a very small number of manuscripts, for the most part of very indifferent character; the other, the fruit of thirty years' assiduous study bestowed upon the apparatus accumulated by genera-

tions of learned labor. The first is exhibited, in English, in the version by King James's divines, in our common use; the second, in a volume published in this city a few years since, entitled, "The New Testament in the Common Version, conformed to Griesbach's Standard Greek Text." Whoever compares them will hardly, from the beginning to the end of the book, be struck with any divergency between them, which he will be disposed to regard as having any bearing on faith or practice, except he find it in the different condition of three texts which have been used in the argument respecting the Trinity;* texts of which Griesbach, still continuing attached to that doctrine with an unshaken adherence, only found occasion to remark, that, while as a critic he felt compelled, on the evidence, to dismiss them from the page as not genuine, as a theologian he was well content to spare them from the controversy.

If the text had been tampered with between the time of the earliest version and the earliest extensive quotations, — that is, at the latest, the beginning of the third century (the age of Origen), — and the present time, with such ample advantages we could not fail at least to detect some indications of the attempt. Such a cloud of now extant witnesses could not be heard testifying with such unanimity as they do. We have thus reduced the chances of corruption of the books within a

* *Acts*, xx. 28; 1 *Tim.* iii. 16; 1 *John*, v. 7.

very narrow space. But was not this space sufficient for the mischief? May there not have been successful attempts at corruption, earlier than the time to which our express authorities reach, in the first century, or century and a half, after the composition of the Gospels?

A virtual reply is, I conceive, given to this question, by what has been already remarked of the high estimation in which the evangelical records were held, by the Christians at the end of the second century, and by their predecessors. The men, who braved every thing and endured so much for their faith in the religion of Jesus, could not have felt any disposition themselves to corrupt the record, which held up to them, and which they relied upon to transmit to future ages, the knowledge of that religion; nor could they have failed strictly to watch, and resolutely to oppose, any attempt at such corruption on the part of others. There is not the slightest reason to suppose, that they would be less tenacious on the subject than the best Christians of the present day, when any attempt of the kind would be regarded as the grossest sacrilege. Nay, under the peculiar excitements of the time, they must be supposed to have been more sensitive on the subject than ourselves, rather than less so. Nor are we left merely to inference, however safe mere inference might be, for our knowledge of their state of feeling on this point. Justin in his "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew," has the following language; "To corrupt the Scriptures would

be more heinous than the consecration of the golden calf, or than the sacrifice of children to demons, or than slaying the prophets themselves." * It is true that he is speaking directly of the Old Testament; but no one would imagine that he, a convert from Gentilism to Christianity, entertained greater veneration for the Old Testament than for the New, or would be more shocked at the crime of corrupting it; and further, we are to remember that he wrote precisely at the time, when the process of corruption, if we suppose it at all, must be supposed to have been most actively going on, that is, mid-way between the time of the evangelists and that of those authorities, at the end of the second century and beginning of the third, which coincide so remarkably with our own copies.

The language of Tertullian is equally express to show how, at the time concerning which we inquire, Christians identified their sense of the worth of the religion with their persuasion of the purity of the books which exhibited it. "We could not know," says he, "the truth of the doctrine, except through the integrity of the books which treat of it." † Origen, who, from his habits of study, would have spared no pains to inform himself as to any diversities of statement in the evangelical books, and who lived at a time so near to that of the original composition, that nothing of the kind could easily have escaped him, acquaints us, in his copious

* Page 296. (Edit. Thirlby)

† *De Præscript. Hæret.* § 38. (p. 246, edit. Rigalt.)

commentaries, with but a very small number of various readings, and these of the same unimportant character as compose our large collection at the present day; and the incidental notices gathered from other ancient writers are of similar import.

The Gospels are written in a peculiar style, as I have before had occasion to remark for a different purpose, and they are, at the same time, so distinguished, in this respect, each from the rest, that it would be impossible to take from one an extract of sufficient length to admit of a comparison, and insert it in another, without the foreign origin of the interpolation being manifest; yet the style of each Gospel, as we have them, is consistent and uniform throughout, thus repelling the idea of foreign matter having been introduced, and this the more decisively, as, according to our best knowledge upon the subject, the multiplication of copies, after the apostolic age, was, in far the greater part, in the hands of Gentile Christians, who were incapable of composing in the Hellenistic dialect, and whose patchwork of classical idiom would at once have told its own story of fraud. The consistency of the representations of the character and doctrine of Christ in each Gospel, is also inconsistent with the supposition of any part of either having come from a later, unauthorized source. And, further, the very occasional apparent discrepancies, to which I have elsewhere alluded, testify to the honest forbearance of the hands through which the copies had passed;

for, if any freedom of alteration was to be used, what impulse could be more natural, or what occasion seem more justifiable, than to use it to silence the cavil of the unbeliever?

I have concluded the subject of the genuineness of the Gospels, as works, and uncorrupt works, of the writers to whom they have been ascribed. I shall next take up that of the truth of the history which they contain. We have ascertained who our witnesses are; and we may read what they testify. The next question is, whether their testimony is deserving of belief.

LECTURE VI.

TRUTH OF THE EVANGELICAL TESTIMONY.

The purpose of my last two Lectures was, to ascertain the genuineness and integrity of the narratives which we receive as the work of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; their genuineness, as being productions of those writers; their integrity, as containing essentially nothing but what they wrote. In determining these two points, we determine on whose testimony it is that we receive the account of the first publication of Christianity, and that the testimony we receive concerning it is actually all theirs. We know now, who the witnesses are that have spoken. Part of them were apostles; that is, constant companions, confidential friends, authorized fellow-laborers and representatives, of the founder of the faith. Part were associated with the apostles in the first preaching of the religion after the death of their master, companions of their toils and travels; one

of them writing, according to a very probable account, under an apostle's express dictation, and both in circumstances to enjoy the fullest and most exact acquaintance with whatever Jesus had said and done, that could possibly be possessed by any but an eye and ear witness.

And now I say, that, if the previous parts of this argument have been sustained, the case of the advocate of Christianity is substantially made out. It was a special, miraculously attested revelation from God, as these men declared it to be. We saw, that, under certain supposable circumstances, a miraculous communication from the Deity to man was a perfectly credible procedure; and that the testimony, alleged to prove such a communication to have been actually made, was liable to no peculiar suspicion, and would be cogent, like other good testimony, in the measure of its clearness and amount. We saw, that, in respect to the asserted revelation in Christianity, those supposable circumstances actually existed; and that, accordingly, there was nothing to prevent that testimony, such as it might turn out to be, from being received as valid for all which it affirmed. "Such as it might turn out to be." What it was, we proceeded next to consider; and we found it to be in our hands, in the form of circumstantial written narratives by persons, whose position was such as to give them a full acquaintance with the facts which they undertook to record; narratives yielding a mutual corroboration, even by their few dis-

crepancies in minor points, forbidding, as such discrepancies do, all suspicion of collusion. Whatever was to be known of the ministry of Jesus, of his deeds, and discourses, and fate, these men were in a condition to know. As far as opportunity for information went, they were competent witnesses, whatever else they might be or might not.

How then do we stand? Certain events, occurring under certain circumstances shown to have actually existed, are in themselves perfectly credible. If they are not so, let it be shown that they are not so. Let the arguments which have been brought to prove that they are, be refuted. Let us expose some fallacy in those reasonings, or else let us yield to their force. There is no third course for reasonable men to take. If we cannot gainsay them, if they are sound, if it is in fact just as credible that God, in a certain exigency, should interpose by miraculous operation for men's benefit, as it is certain that he is all-powerful and good, then let us rest in this conclusion, and go on as if it were true. This is no occasion, on which we may conclude and agree in one moment, and then suffer ourselves to be mystified, in the next, by some indefinite diffidence as to whether we are standing on firm ground. Let us not be embarrassed at any subsequent stage of the argument, let us not allow our perception of its merits to be confused, by any vague, unexplained, unanalyzed, indescribable distrust upon a point upon which we

have once deliberately obtained satisfaction and passed judgment. Certain events, occurring under certain circumstances, the latter proved to have really existed at the time of the alleged occurrence of the former, are in themselves perfectly credible. Still they might not have happened. But certain persons come forward and say, that they actually did happen; and this they do in no general terms, but in very circumstantial written statements, with full specifications of time, place, matter, manner, and occasion; and these persons we ascertain to be such, as from their peculiarities of personal position, had the best advantages for being acquainted with the truth, whatever the truth was, in relation to the matters respecting which they undertake to inform us.

Now what I say is, that, at the point at which we have arrived, a full *primâ facie* case is made out by the advocate of the divine origin of Christianity. The presumption is, that the events took place according to the unequivocal and confident assertion of the witnesses, competent in point of opportunity for information, who have deposed to us. When competent witnesses affirm a probable thing, the common and the proper course is to believe them. It is now for the infidel to show that the common course is not in this instance proper to be taken; that this testimony of competent witnesses to a credible thing, is, after all, delusive testimony. If he can prove this, then he defeats our argument in this its latest stage; if he cannot prove it, but

can make it in some greater or less degree probable, then, in just the degree that he makes it probable, he unsettles or weakens our belief. But he must prove, or make this probable, if at all, from considerations relating to the witnesses themselves, to their character and evidence. We cannot allow him any longer to borrow aid in the argument from delusions, pertaining to previous points, which we have detected and dismissed.

These considerations prepare us to look fairly at the positive evidence; to look at it as just and prudent men should do; for justice is what we owe to it, as to every thing that solicits our attention; and a prudent, careful, safe, intelligent estimate of evidence is quite as far removed from a fanciful, whimsical, obstinate skepticism, on the one hand, as from a credulity of the same character, on the other. If the evidence in the present case is trustworthy, *if what the evangelists affirm is true*, then undoubtedly the religion of their master was from God. Did they tell the truth? It is supposable, that they did not. To suppose imposture or delusion, when a thing in itself likely is affirmed, is not a course which we usually take with a witness. Still, in a case of so much importance, we do well to institute a severe scrutiny. Only let us take care that the scrutiny we institute be wise and just, as well as severe; that it be not employed in curiously devising possible grounds of scruple, but be honestly directed to the determination of the truth.

It is supposable that what the evangelists have affirmed to us as being the truth, may not be true. And this may have taken place in either the one or the other of two ways. They may not have intended to tell the truth. They may have proposed to deceive. They may have been impostors. This is the first possible remaining supposition for the infidel. Again; they may have intended to tell the truth, but been in error in respect to it. They may have been themselves deceived. They may have been enthusiasts and dupes. This is the second. It is to the first that our attention may well be limited this evening.

No consideration perhaps strikes us sooner in relation to the suspicion of intended fraud, than that of the extraordinary incongruity between the character which it attributes to the messenger, and that which undeniably belongs to the message. These evangelists were preachers of Christianity, a religion which teaches the most exalted, ingenuous, punctilious virtue; which insists with the most strenuous urgency upon a perfect sincerity of life, word, and heart; which rebukes with a most uncompromising sternness the current and well-esteemed hypocrisies of the time; which pronounces its heavy maledictions on "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Now the point here is not, that the supposition in question implies a contradiction between the precepts of these writers and their practice; — that men's conduct should not come up to their principles, is not a thing so uncommon as to

refute any inference drawn from supposing it;—but it is, that the end evidently had in view absolutely precludes the possibility of any such means having been employed to attain it. The evangelists were not political rulers, who, it is supposable, may resort to artifice, in order to enforce religious restraints upon a people, with a view to worldly objects of their own. They were not in alliance with the authorities of this world; on the contrary, wherever they went, they found themselves in a hostile attitude in relation to them, not through any project of opposition on their part, but by very force of the holy and reforming doctrine they were propagating. They were at great pains to persuade men to renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, and be, for their own sakes, true-spoken and true-hearted; such was the fact. And the pains they took were in the way of a stupendous falsehood of their own; such is the theory. The object contemplated and toiled for by them, cannot easily be conceived of as being any other than to make men a community of saints; and the method which the objection supposes them to have used to accomplish this, was an elaborate scheme of villany.

Again; we are always naturally ready to make some inference respecting the trustworthiness of a witness, from the manner in which he delivers his testimony. Let us settle in our minds whether there is any thing in this, entitled to have weight in the way of confirmation or discredit of a story, before we look at the actual character of the testi-

mony of the evangelists in the respect in question. I submit then to the familiar experience of those whom I address, that an inference of this kind is reasonable. There is something very real and significant, which we mean when we speak of *an honest appearance* in a witness. There is an air of simplicity, candor, frankness, plain-dealing, which is by no means easily counterfeited, and which, on the contrary, creates new chances of detection with every attempt to feign it; there is such a clear signature of sincerity and truth upon the face of some evidence to which we attend, as infallibly and rightfully conciliates to it our confidence. And there is an appearance, the opposite of this, which as naturally and unavoidably puts us on our guard, creates distrust, and hinders or weakens any satisfaction in what is told us. How often has it happened in the courts, that a witness's appearance of timidity, constraint, caution, cunning, has excited a suspicion of his integrity, and thus led to a close scrutiny, which had not before been thought of, and which has ended in a detection of his fraud. Nothing is sure of being perfectly consistent with itself, but perfect truth. A witness who does not mean to tell the truth cannot be expected to see the bearings of every thing he tells on every other thing, and thus is always liable to commit himself by some inconsistency of statement. If he avoid such incoherencies, it will only be by extreme care; and this extreme care, on the other hand, is exceedingly likely to betray itself, and to indicate its cause

in the existing state of mind. The witness who says only the thing that is, cannot impeach himself; part of the truth can never be used to refute any other part; and the consciousness of this gives him ease and confidence in telling his story, while that very inventiveness of falsehood, in which it expects to find its safety, does but keep spreading snares for its feet.

Now, never was a more unvarnished tale delivered, than that of the four evangelists. If ever there were marks of simple honesty impressed on any composition, there do they most conspicuously stand. No one can imagine, as he reads, that the idea had ever entered their minds, of dressing up the story, which they had to tell, so as to make it appear in its most unexceptionable form. They never study indefiniteness of expression, nor appear afraid to descend into particulars, as false witnesses are apt to do, lest they should furnish the means of their own confutation; but, on the contrary, they abound in particulars, opening infinite opportunities of detection, provided there was any thing to detect. It is very remarkable, in how perfectly simple, concise, unadorned a manner they relate the stupendous miracles of their master; neither preparing the way, by advertising the reader beforehand, that he is going to be informed of something wonderful; nor conciliating incredulity by arguments, or asseverations, or references to others who might confirm their narrative; nor stopping to draw some inference, or to deepen the impression before they pass on to

something else; but simply saying what they have to say in the most quiet and unpretending plainness of truth, as one might be expected to do, who was concerning himself about nothing except his own business of bearing an honest testimony, who did not perplex himself by anticipating unbelief, or calculating in any way the impression which might be made upon other minds. I recollect but one instance opposed to this prevailing *unconsciousness*, as it may be called; and that is one, for which there was a peculiar occasion. The apostle John, writing in his old age, several years later than the other evangelists, does say, after speaking of a circumstance attending the death of Jesus, of which probably he alone of the disciples was a witness, "He that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." But when I recite these words, simple asseveration as they are, no one can help observing how different is their style from the common manner of these writers.

I do not know whether the impression of candor and fairness in the evangelists, gathered from the whole tone of their narrative, is capable of being increased by reference to any examples. On the contrary, that very freedom from ostentation, from pretension and rhetorical artifice, which we are remarking upon, implies the absence of any prominence in single parts of the story. If they did stand out prominently, if they would serve singly to sustain an argument, they would no longer

be instances of what we are appealing to them for. Still, a few facts, of a kind of which I might select a large number, may serve to confine our thoughts a few moments longer to the subject, if they are of no material use in the way of illustration.

The evangelists concern themselves not at all to disguise the partial effect produced by the deeds and teachings of their master. "Neither did his brethren," says John, "yet believe on him;" and in another place, where Jesus had employed an obscure form of discourse, the same evangelist represents the hearers as saying, "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" and he ends the account by recording, that "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." On the occasion of the cure of the blind man in the temple, he frankly allows, that "the Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been blind, and received his sight;" and, when he has recounted at length, how, on inquiry into the fact, they obtained evidence which they could no longer dispute, still, while he says, that, on the one part, the sound reasoning was heard, "These are not the words of him that hath a demon, can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" he records that there were others who refused even then to be convinced, and insisted, "He hath a demon, and is mad; why hear ye him?" Two of the evangelists even tell us that his impatient forerunner, John, sent messengers to him with the question, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" Observe the perfect free-

dom from all attempt to soften any thing of a repulsive character in the narrative. A disciple said to Jesus, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." It was not any insensibility to the claims of filial duty, but an absorbing sense of the obligation of diffusing the radiance of that light which he had come to bring into the world, that led Jesus to reply, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Still the language, at first view, has an appearance of harshness, from which it does not seem to have occurred to the evangelist that he was at all concerned to vindicate it. The institution of the eucharist, appointed at the last Paschal supper at Jerusalem, was the distinguishing rite of Christianity; and so we find that it was regarded by St. Paul, when, many years after, he was writing to the distant church of Corinth.* In its great object and its inexpressibly tender associations, what a temptation did it offer to an ambitious writer to embellish, or at least expand, his account of its origin; yet how few and simple words serve the evangelists for that record.† How candidly have they related their own errors and faults, and those of their associates. How freely have they acquainted posterity with that dulness of theirs, which resisted so long the patient instructions of Jesus concerning the spiritual nature of his kingdom. They tell us of the incredulity of Thomas; ‡ of the am-

* 1 *Cor.* xi. 20 *et seq.*

† *Matthew*, xxvi. 26; *Mark*, xiv. 22; *Luke*, xxii. 17. ‡ *John*, xx. 25.

bitious project of James and John to secure to themselves the places of honor, when their Master should ascend the proud throne which their imaginations promised him ;* of the unbecoming resentment of the same disciples, when the company was refused admittance to a Samaritan village, and the peremptory faithfulness with which it was rebuked ;† of Peter's unworthy remonstrance with Jesus when he spoke of his impending sufferings, and the vehement reproof called forth by his self-seeking weakness ; ‡ of the same disciple's reiterated denial of his Master ; § and of all the disciples' forsaking him and fleeing, when, already in the hands of his remorseless enemies, he was about to be led as a lamb to the slaughter.‖ I have here of course no other concern with texts of this description, than to inquire, whether they are easily to be reconciled with any view of their authors' character, except that which regards them as fair and honest witnesses, who meant to tell the truth, whatever inference might be drawn from it.

A third remark I make on this question of honestly intended testimony, is, that, if there was fraud, then there was conspiracy. It was not the close fraud of one, but the concerted fraud of many. If these men did not testify to the truth, then they and their associates had agreed to testify to what was not true, in order to serve some purposes of their own, whether those purposes can be imagined

* *Matthew*, xx. 20. † *Luke*, ix. 54. ‡ *Matthew*, xvi. 22.
§ *Matthew*, xxvi. 69. ‖ *Matthew*, xxvi. 56.

by us or not. And this supposition of a plot I wish to bring to a test, which I do not remember to have seen distinctly applied. The hazard to a plot always is from the unfaithfulness of some conspirator, who is urged by the remonstrances of a re-awakened conscience, or by the hope of some greater gain, to impeach his confederates, and expose their machinations. There is no safety for a plot, nor for its framers, except in keeping the accomplices closely united in point of interest and of feeling. If alienations grow up, if distrusts get ground, if passions are aroused, the party which finds itself worsted loses its interest in the prosecution of the scheme, and at the same time has its easy resource for revenge in betraying while it abandons.

Now the New Testament historians have never so much as hinted at the argument which I am about to propose. It would not have been of the value that it is to us, did it appear ever to have occurred to their minds; we might then suppose that it was with a view to it, that they recorded facts, which now we perceive to be naturally and incidentally mentioned as they took their places in the history. There were occasions of dissension, and there were serious dissensions, in this small body, every member of which, according to the scheme I am combating, must be understood to have had a very important secret of his own, and of the others, to keep.

I do not lay so much stress upon jealousies and

heart-burnings in their partially enlightened state, while attending upon the personal ministry of Jesus; though then we read that the rest were on one occasion "greatly displeased with James and John"; that there was that always exasperating strife among them, "which should be greatest;" and that, when some of the apostles fell in with some other authorized persons who were casting out demons in the name of Jesus (whom I take to have been individuals of the "seventy," related by Luke to have been sent out by Jesus in separate companies), they, jealous for their supremacy, angrily forbade the others, because "they followed not with them," or did not fall into their train. But a few incidents of the following years will serve to show us what degree of safety there could have been for a plot, whose safety depended on a secrecy, which, in its turn, was to be secured only by an uninterrupted good understanding between the confederated parties.

When Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by Mark, the nephew of the latter, had come, on the first journey of the great apostle, to Perga in Pamphylia, and Mark, there "departing from them, returned to Jerusalem," his secession occasioned a difference between him and Paul, which does not appear to have been reconciled for years; and Barnabas also became involved in it, for when Paul subsequently proposed to him a second joint expedition, Barnabas, we read, "determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But

Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other, and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus, and Paul chose Silas, and departed." When Peter, — Peter, the chief of the apostles, — "was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face," writes Paul in his letter to the Galatians, "because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James," — that is, from Jerusalem, where James appears to have been permanently established, as the person of chief consideration among the disciples there, — "he did eat with the Gentiles; but, when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."

And this reference leads us away from the consideration of particulars of personal misunderstanding, to the great exciting controversy of the apostolic age. The Acts and the Epistles contain constant references to a dispute upon a question of the most delicate and irritating character; and I feel authorized to use the testimony of these books upon that point, without having particularly proved their authority, because the statements are in the nature of admissions, which would have been much more likely to be withheld, though true, than volunteered, if false. The question was, whether Gentile converts could be admitted into the Church, except by observing the rite of

circumcision; that is, except by first becoming proselytes to Judaism. This question touched the very organization of the church. It was a question of privilege, on both sides; on the one side, of a right to impose terms; on the other, of an unconditional liberty. What one party claimed as a rightful and divinely authorized precedency, the other denounced as gross and offensive usurpation. What one asserted to be just and reasonable liberty, the other insisted was only license and disorder.

To bring them together in one communion and community, the cherished antipathies of ages were to be subdued. The Jew had not been more taught in his youth to hate the Gentile, than the Gentile had learned to despise the Jew. The very apostles who defended the principle of a unity in the Church, founded on the abolition of all past peculiarities, and the consequent recognition of a perfect liberty and equality in the converts from heathenism, had to do it at the sacrifice of feelings, which to part with must have seemed to them like plucking out a right eye. "I have never eaten any thing common or unclean," was the plaintive reply of Peter, indicating the struggle that was going on in his mind, when, by a visionary representation, he was instructed, that what God, who was no respecter of persons, had cleansed, he must no longer allow himself to call common; and how adhesive the notion still was to his honest, but not always firm mind, appears from that subsequent compliance of his, at Antioch,

with the prejudices of his countrymen, which exposed him to the rebuke of his younger associate. The account, in the eleventh chapter of the Acts, of the reception of Peter at Jerusalem after offering the religion to Cornelius and his Gentile friends at Cæsarea, and that, in the fifteenth chapter of the same book, of the occasion and proceedings of the council at Jerusalem, in which the future course to be pursued with Gentile converts was determined, show the intense dissatisfaction with which, by a portion of the associates, the movement was regarded; and the Epistles are full of references, more or less extended, according to the occasion, to the exasperation produced, wherever Gentile and Jewish converts met, by the assertion of their conflicting claims. I do not know better how to characterize the case, than to say that it concerned *the politics* of the church, and that passions like those of political partisanship became enlisted, as we well know that they may be in honest and generous minds.

I might extend the enumeration of such facts, and speak in particular of the divisions in the church of Corinth, which Paul was at so much pains to heal.* But I have wished to confine myself to cases where an obvious breach of perfect union (such as, it would appear, must inevitably have broken out into an utter separation and enmity,

* 1 *Cor.* i. 10, *et seq.*

unless there had been a controlling consciousness of common interest in a great and holy cause to reconcile it) existed, not among underlings, who might not have had any deception to expose, being themselves its dupes, but among the chiefs of the enterprise, who must have been privy to the plot, if there were one. And I ask, whether, on well-ascertained principles of human nature, men under the influence of such excitements one against another could possibly have gone on together, in the prosecution of a dishonest scheme, with any thing of the unanimity which its success required; whether, between the provocations mutually offered, and the apprehension, on each side, that the discontent on the other side would provoke to a public exposure, — an apprehension tempting each to reap the advantage of being the first to make it, — it would have been possible for the conspiracy, had there been one, not to be exposed, and, by exposure, crushed.

Further; men who enter into a combination for imposture, undertake a great deal of trouble. To carry on a scheme of deception alone, a scheme which requires no confidant, is a very hard task; to carry on such a scheme in partnership with others, on whose fidelity, prudence, and resource, one is not absolutely sure how fully he can count, is an excessively anxious and heart-wearing one. Such schemes are undertaken. But, when they are, it is in consideration of something which will pay the heavy cost. There must be some strong

moving power to set this reluctant machinery in operation. Nothing can be more certain, than that men do not devote themselves to any toilsome and annoying service, except in the hope of something, which, to their minds, whether rightly or wrongly judging, appears a sufficient recompense. The first preachers of our religion were of course influenced to what they did by some motive. If theirs was a fraudulent enterprise, then their motive was worldly; then they expected their reward in this life, for men do not promise themselves the least reward in the other, for the most indefatigable labors of dishonesty.

Will any one point out what valuable worldly consideration they obtained or expected for what they did? I am presently to speak briefly, under another head, of the recompense which they did obtain, and which they must have certainly anticipated, choosing the course they did choose. But here I wish rather to suggest the course, which, if they had had the view to worldly recompenses implied in the imputation of a fraudulent purpose, they unquestionably would have taken. They were able, it appears, with good reason or bad, to convince a portion of the community around them of their Master's ability, and their own, to perform miraculous works. Thus they held a lever of immense power, wherewith to act upon that community for their own purposes. Their enterprise found that community in an extremely excited state. The subject of excitement was the supposed

approaching advent of the Messiah, the long expected deliverer of the nation from its state of political depression, and the exalter of it to power and greatness. Of this darling hope they found the minds and hearts of all around them full. When John, the forerunner of Jesus, appeared and attracted attention, "the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts whether he were the Christ or not;" and the Jews even "sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who art thou,?'" and the particular object of their inquiry is made manifest by the tenor of his reply, when "he confessed, 'I am not the Christ.'"

Nothing could have been more opportune for the furtherance of a scheme, of the character supposed to have been concocted, than the existing state of things. It was sufficient to dictate the direction which the plot should take, even if it had been devised at first without any more definite intention than that of establishing an influence, and then taking advantage of circumstances as they arose. Why did not the apostles take advantage of the existing state of things? The flame which they had kindled in not a few minds by their words and deeds, while they proclaimed themselves to be the Messiah's ministers, why did they not feed by confirming and inflaming the prejudices of their countrymen, by representing that Messiah in the magnificent character he was understood by them to sustain, and so gathering a band of followers to set up the standard of rebellion against Rome?

Was it because the scheme did not occur to them? They must have been inapprehensive, to the last degree, if it did not. But in fact, so far from not occurring to them, it was the project, — firing every Jewish mind, and therefore theirs, — which the instructions of Jesus, through his whole personal ministry, had been directed with only partial success to banish from their minds; so that, even after his resurrection, their half expostulating inquiry was, Lord, wilt thou not at this time, — at this time, since thou didst not do it during thy first sojourn among us, — "wilt thou not at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Were they deterred by a sense of the magnitude of the enterprise? It was not a hopeless one. At any rate, which is much more to the purpose, it did not seem so to a Jewish mind. Such an enthusiasm as then existed is not timid. It does not make a very close calculation of the proportion of means to ends; and that the enterprise was not in truth esteemed hopeless, is shown by the fact, for which we have the warranty of the Jewish historian, of repeated attempts to take advantage of the prevailing state of feeling and marshal an enterprise to throw off the Roman yoke, by means of pretensions to the character of Messiah, as that character was popularly conceived.

Did the disciples of Jesus despair of concentrating the attention of the people upon their Master in this relation? On the contrary, not only, to the extent of the confidence which their wonderful

works had inspired, had they obtained a great power to direct the prevailing enthusiasm at their pleasure, but repeatedly were they invited and encouraged to this attempt by popular demonstrations in his favor. The crowds which resorted to him gave constant uneasiness to the rulers of the nation. On one occasion, the multitude, impatient at his pertinacious indisposition to any thing like public honors, "would have taken him by force, and made him a king;" and, on his last entry into Jerusalem, the reception which would have promptly awaited him, on the part, at least, of numbers of its citizens, — the character, even, which there was a disposition in some quarters to force upon him, — is seen, where we read that "a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way, and the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, 'Hosanna to the son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest;' and, when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved."

If any one objects, that these particular statements, — relating to the temptation which the ministers of Jesus were under to attempt the establishment of a temporal dominion, had they contemplated any selfish end, — occur in the writings of the evangelists, whose truth is the very question at issue, I ask him to observe, in the first place, that they fall out so naturally, and without the slightest appearance of any intention to provide in them the

basis of an argument, that it is hard to imagine that there can be any reason to distrust their truth; and, in the second place, I ask him, if he see cause, to dismiss these particular statements of theirs from the argument, and say whether the remaining considerations, which have been presented, are not of decisive strength. Still it will remain true, that, in the age when, by a pretence of miracles, well or ill-grounded, the first preachers of our religion obtained a great influence in Judea, there was a prevailing and earnest expectation of a divine interference for a political emancipation of the Jewish race; and that they refrained from any attempt to turn this easily managed expectation to account, for any selfish purpose of their own. What they did, and all they did, as friend and foe alike understand, was to busy themselves in diffusing a religion.

I have chosen to enlarge upon these topics, not perhaps so commonly considered, rather than give much space to an argument, which, by reason of its decisive importance, is very familiar, and is apt to attract almost exclusive regard. Dishonest effort implies the hope of some selfish advantage. Effort accompanied by the abandonment of every selfish advantage, contradicts the supposition of dishonesty. Men do not make sacrifices, except in the hope of eventual gain, or from a sense of duty. But the early preachers of our religion made the most unsparing sacrifices. They devoted themselves to labors, they exposed themselves to

dangers, they underwent hardships, they endured sufferings, such as it is not in human nature voluntarily to consent to, in the maintenance of an unprofitable falsehood. To sustain this statement, I am perhaps not at liberty to appeal to the Acts of the Apostles for an exhibition of the toilsome tasks which the company of the preachers executed, of the essentially new course of life adopted by them under the impulse of their faith, and of the contempt and outrage, of which they became the helpless objects; nor for an enumeration of such examples as that of the arraignment and imprisonment of Peter and John after the day of Pentecost, and of all the apostles soon after, at Jerusalem; of that of Paul and Silas at Philippi; of the mission of Paul to Damascus, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord;" of "the great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem," causing the disciples to be "scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria"; of the Jewish plot against Paul and Barnabas at Iconium, and those against Paul on his first visit to Jerusalem, after his conversion, and before his two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea; of his arraignment before Gallio at Corinth; of the assault upon his dwelling at Thessalonica, his escape from the torture of scourging in a Roman fort only by pleading the immunities of a Roman citizen, and his earlier endurance of it at Philippi; of the stoning of Stephen and of Paul by infuriated crowds, without any forms of justice; of the kill-

ing of "James, the brother of John," by Herod, "with the sword," and his proceeding further, "because he saw it pleased the Jews, to take Peter also." I am perhaps, not at liberty to refer to this authority, because the course and limits of my argument have not permitted me to enter into the proof of the genuineness and trustworthiness of the book; nor, for the same reason, may I make use of those everywhere occurring references which are found in the Epistles, — not complaints, not accounts, not descriptions, but references to past and passing events, to existing circumstances and feelings, to chances of what is to come, — which show the lives of the writers, and of those whom they address, to have been lives of continual hardship, and ever-present peril.

But, dismissing these topics of proof, — which there is no reason why we should dismiss, except the want of opportunity to establish first in detail their historical authority, — I suppose no one doubts that the Master of these men was put to death at Jerusalem, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar (if any one does, he may satisfy himself of it from the page of the profane historian Tacitus,* as well as from that of the four evangelists), or can well doubt, any more, that when his followers undertook to carry on the enterprise which he had set on foot, they must have understood themselves to be taking the chances of a fate like his. No one can

* *Ann.* Lib. xv. § 44.

fail to see that the preaching of such a faith, at that period of the world, by private, defenceless individuals, necessarily would entail a great amount of hardship and ill treatment; proclaiming, as it did, disappointment to the dearest patriotic expectations of the Jews, and opposed as it was to the technical spirit of their system, or rather to what their puerile refinements had made their system to be; urging an exclusive claim, as it did, to reception, when it offered itself to Gentile misbelievers, and calling on them, without the admission of the smallest compromise, to abandon their temples, and cease their offerings, and desecrate their idols, and cleanse themselves from their moral defilements; and sternly denouncing, as it did, against sinners of every name, the displeasure of that God, who, if he had permitted the past times of ignorance, was now, by their ministry, "calling on all men everywhere to repent, because he would judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he had ordained."

No one can doubt that a fierce persecution did follow the first publication of this faith, unless he supposes the evangelists to have been insanely intent on destroying the credit of their Master, when they repeatedly represent him as warning them beforehand of the price which their fidelity would cost. For certainly, unless they were thus incredibly bent on refuting themselves the claim which they set up for him, they would not have made, either truly or falsely, the representation

which they have made, when they say that he foretold that they should be delivered up to be afflicted, and should be killed, and should be hated of all nations for his name's sake; that men should lay hands on them and persecute them, and deliver them up to the synagogues, and into prisons; that they should be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolk and friends; and that some of them should be put to death, he that killed them thinking that he did God service. They could not either truly or falsely have made the representation that he used such language, unless the language was known by those, for whom they wrote, to have been verified by the event.

No one will doubt that bitter persecution was the lot of the early professors of the faith, unless he is prepared to falsify all the early ecclesiastical history, which is full of the records of their sufferings. No one will doubt it, unless he is prepared to set aside explicit testimonies of profane history. Says Pliny the younger, writing to the Emperor from his Asiatic government, about the year 100, not improbably during the lifetime of John; "Those who, repeatedly interrogated, still avowed themselves Christians, I ordered to be led away" [that is, to execution].* Says Suetonius, speaking of an earlier time, in the reign of Nero, while many of the apostles, it is likely, still lived; "The Christians, a set of men of a new and

* *Epist.* Plinii. Lib. x. Epist. 97 (Vol. II. p. 127, edit. Bipont.)

baleful superstition, were punished;"* and the cold and negligent brevity of the statement only betrays, in a more shocking light, the inhuman temper of the time. And Tacitus, treating of that persecution under the same emperor, under which it has been believed that Paul and Peter sealed their testimony with their blood, records that Nero, to avert the suspicion which had fallen on him of having set fire to Rome, "pursued with the most ingenious punishments, a set of people, whom ..... the vulgar called *Christians*..... Some, who confessed their sect, were first seized, and afterwards, by their information, a vast multitude." Their sufferings at their execution, he continues, "were aggravated by insult and mockery; for some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs; some were crucified; and others were set on fire, and, when the day closed, burnt to enlighten the darkness. Nero lent his own gardens for that spectacle."†

This is the sort of proof we have, in one form, of the integrity of the first professors and teachers of that faith, whose claim to have been first taught by honest men we are now discussing. We speak of the willing sufferings of the early Christians, and, when we have finished a paragraph on the subject, we fancy that we have our argument. But there is rich and pathetic meaning in the story, which that single word *martyrdom* tells. These early Christians were men. If they did live in

* Suetonii, *Vita Neronis*, § 16. † Tac. *Ann*; Lib. xv. cap. 44.

Judea, or Corinth, or Rome, and we elsewhere, still they had pulses to throb, and nerves to quiver and agonize, like our own; and the tearing iron, supporting the frame by its mangled extremities on the cross, the lacerating teeth of fierce animals set on to be gorged with their flesh and blood, the slow torture of flame, made them feel as we should feel under the same infliction; and, if we think that it would leave us little heart to hold out in any such assertion, as that a dead man, who we knew could do nothing to help us, was the Son of God, sent on an errand of salvation into his world, we shall equally be disposed to conclude, that it was only what they had in good faith declared, that under such circumstances, they persevered in. These Christians were parents and children, brothers and friends, husbands, — yes, and wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, for this is what one of our early historians tells us; "Through malice women too have been persecuted, and, having suffered very grievous and cruel punishments, though weak in body, have finished a faithful Christian course, and obtained a glorious reward."* These all, — and many of them have no place or name in history, — had hearts like ours to be wrung, when the beloved ones were made to drink of such a cup of horrors; but they had hearts too to meet, and nerve others to meet, the brave and stern duty which had fallen to their lot, and so to seal the faith they loved for our acceptance in these latter days.

* Clement Rom. *ad Corinth*, § vi. (p. 141, edit. Lond. 1694.)

Do, then, the considerations, to which we have this evening attended, show that the testimony, borne by the evangelists and other early teachers of our religion, was true? No; but they do show, that it was a testimony which they honestly and undoubtingly believed to be true. Still it remains abstractly possible, that that honest belief of theirs was an erroneous belief; that, though not impostors, they were themselves deluded. "Abstractly possible," I say. Whether it can be regarded as possible under the circumstances, is the practical question; and to that I am to attend in my next Lecture.

LECTURE VII.

TRUTH OF THE EVANGELICAL TESTIMONY.

[CONTINUED.]

HAVING previously exhibited the proof, which shows the testimony to the transactions recorded in the four books called *Gospels* to be actually the testimony of persons competent, in point of opportunity, to give it, that is, of apostles of Jesus, the founder of Christianity, eye and ear witnesses to his deeds and discourses, and of associates of those apostles, I proceeded, in my last Lecture, to the inquiry, whether that testimony is to be taken by us for true. And I offered various considerations to establish the point, that it is the testimony of honest witnesses; of persons who undoubtingly believed themselves what they have presented for our belief.

But it must be owned, that that conclusion does not determinately settle the ultimate question at issue. The absolute belief, entertained by the evangelists, of the truth of what they affirmed, is

valuable to us simply so far as it may reasonably convey to us the assurance, that what they affirmed actually *was* true. Their conviction was itself an effect, which we are to trace to its cause. What a person, of whose sincerity we are certain, confidently asserts, we do not of necessity confidently believe ourselves. We ask, whether he has had sufficient opportunity to learn the exact truth respecting that which he thinks he knows. If we see that he has not had that opportunity, or if we doubt whether he has had it, we feel justified in discrediting what he asserts, without any impeachment of his good faith. As to both these points, of honest purpose in the testimony, and of adequate opportunity of information respecting its subject matter, the questions, as they arise upon the case of the evangelical records, have already been discussed. But another question remains. It is abstractly credible, that persons who intend to tell nothing but truth may not tell it, even when they have occupied a position affording them every advantage for acquaintance with it. It is abstractly supposable, that the state of their own minds may have been such, at the time when they made the observations which they undertake to communicate to us, that we may not safely rely on the correctness of their perceptions.

The strongest case of this kind is that of an insane man. We may be thoroughly persuaded that he means to express to us the present convictions of his own mind, and that he has occupied

a situation, such that, had his mind been but sane, its convictions could not fail to represent the truth. His mental operations, however, not being healthy, fail to afford us any warrant for adopting their results. The charge of insanity, taking the word in the full customary strength of its meaning, has not, I suppose, ever been made against the early teachers of our faith. Such an hypothesis has too little plausibility to invite a moment's support, both because of its palpable inconsistency with the recorded course of conduct of the individuals concerned, separately viewed, and because it would be an altogether incredible novelty in the history of mental aberration, to find a consistent, permanent, and vigorous agreement among a number of persons laboring under this infirmity. Mental derangement is an idiopathy. While it is doubtless liable to be excited in numbers by some general cause, still it has its deeper seated causes in the individual mind, affecting the particular direction it shall take in each. Each insane person cherishes his own special delusion; you shall go through all the mad-houses of the world, and scarcely meet two who would consent in the same, or, at any rate, who would not fail to consent, should you bring them together.

But, though the idea of a uniformity, in the first place, of erroneous perception, and then, consequent upon it, of a concert of persevering action on the part of a number of persons of (strictly speaking) unsettled reason, is so preposterous as to forbid

that it should be a moment entertained, it must be allowed that a mind, not positively diseased, may yet be so unbalanced by some possessing and overmastering passion, as to take away the basis of that confidence, which would otherwise be due to its sincere representations of fact. And that this was the case with the first ministers of Jesus Christ, is the sense meant to be conveyed, when it is said, that they were not impostors, but enthusiasts. The intimation is, that their minds were so possessed by a bewildering idea, as to prevent the correctness of the impressions which themselves received; and accordingly those impressions, though communicated in good faith to us, cannot safely be received by us as conforming to the truth.

Here is another of those representations, so common in this controversy, which take effect on some minds, because, as mere matter of theory, as representations of something which under some supposable circumstances might happen, they cannot be gainsaid. But the question is not, whether we can imagine circumstances, in which the supposition of delusion through an excited state of mind would be admissible, but whether it is admissible under the circumstances which actually, in the given case, existed; whether it admits of being reconciled with those circumstances. If you say, that, such and such things being thus, such and such other things might be so, I shall admit your statement of that abstraction, provided the statement hangs logically together; but, if you cannot

show that such and such things were thus, — if it is certain that they were otherwise, — if your *condition precedent* fails, — then your statement may be very good as a principle of reasoning in a system of philosophy, but, as to any utility in respect to the case in hand, it becomes no better than a combination of irrelevant words.

That the condition precedent does, in this case, entirely fail, is, I think, satisfactorily seen in the consideration of two particulars; especially of one of them (the second to be named), because of the superior conclusiveness, with which it admits of being itself made out. They are, that, first, the original preachers of our religion were not enthusiasts in the sense here had in view; and that, secondly, the supposition of their being enthusiasts, could it be sustained, would not be suitable to invalidate their testimony, considering what is the nature of the facts to which their testimony relates.

In the first place, the original preachers of our religion were not enthusiasts. They were under no such hallucination of mind, as might render suspicious their testimony to any matters of fact. We can point to nothing in the manifestation of their state of mind, either in conduct or speech, to justify such an imputation upon them. There is nothing in what any one would think of calling their madness, but had too much method in it to admit of its being so construed. We see in the history of their relation to Jesus, before and after his death, the natural course of plain, undistinguished men, in the

industrious walks of life, who, entertaining at first the hopes common to all their fellow-citizens, of a speedily coming time of regeneration and emancipation, of political and religious empire, for Israel, welcomed what seemed to them the promise of the fulfilment of that hope, in him whom they saw going about doing mighty works, such as none could do, unless God were with him. Influenced by motives, which, — so far from being of an exalted, dreamy, uncalculating character, so far from being of that class which transport the mind out of itself, unfix past habits of thought, and raise a doubt, how much of common understanding and feeling remains between the individual thus affected and others, — contained altogether too great an alloy of mere worldly self-seeking, they attach themselves to this divinely endowed teacher, to receive his instructions, to minister in his enterprise, to win a share in his expected greatness. Instead of being struck with any appearance in them of diseased excitement, we are much more tempted to wonder that the constant, condescending familiarity of their Master so far suppressed those appearances of excitement, which we should have esteemed to be altogether natural. They go with him, from one step to another, through the course of his ministry, showing on the whole a disposition of docility, which the sense they entertained of his character and office could not but inspire, but frequently permitting their views to temporal aggrandizement to manifest themselves, and very slowly yielding to

the impression, which he was laboring to make upon their minds, of the true nature of his destined service and theirs. In their little jealousies of one another, in their remonstrances with their Master, in their poor conceptions of the object to which he would devote himself and them, I submit that they give as little evidence as can well be imagined of a distempered elevation of mind. The very fault in their characters, at the time when they were convinced by the miracles of Jesus, and long after, was, if I may so express it, that they were altogether too commonplace. When Jesus had been taken from them, we have all the assurance that they were not then in a sickly, imaginative frame, which can be afforded by what we witness of the great prudence, vigor, and efficiency of their concerted action for the promotion of the common faith. And, as to those, who have allowed us to judge of their state of mind from their writings, the authors of the Gospel histories, were ever narratives written, — I appeal to any reader of them, — which more unequivocally betoken a perfectly calm, sound, collected, reasonable condition of their authors' understanding?

But, not to enlarge on a statement which involves a somewhat comprehensive survey of minute facts, and may be thought to have a degree of indefiniteness, there is one fact in this connexion which I think cannot fail to strike every mind as significant. Enthusiasm is a mental attribute or habit, which has its own laws, as well as others. One of its

laws is, that it builds on something which has excited the mind while yet in a sound state, and excited it at length beyond the bounds of health; and another is, that it depends on the continued or increasing influence of that exciting idea for its continued life or growth, and is chilled as the influence of that is withdrawn; and chilled, too, not only by the loss of the force which it had exerted, but also through the very process by which it is removed or weakened; for enthusiasm is, of its nature, adverse to all distinctions, or restraints, or discipline. It is as sensitive to discouragement, as it is adventurous when in full career; let a check come from the quarter whence it looked for aliment, and it faints and fails. Now we know what was the exciting idea in the minds of the disciples, when they attached themselves to Jesus. It was that of the approaching political re-establishment of their nation, and of his being destined to achieve it. This idea was the basis in them for enthusiasm to be built upon. Had it been nursed by the proper arts, there is no knowing to what a height of enthusiasm it might have been made to reach. But we know equally well that Jesus made no such use of it. On the contrary, this feeling, if I may so speak, was, from the moment of their joining him, in a process of suppression. From that moment they were in the condition, so hostile to an enthusiastic habit, of men who found their most impulsive opinions and feelings checked and blamed, in the quarter whence they had most surely counted

on nourishment for them. I am not of course pretending that the disciples were not still in a state of mind to welcome every manifestation of supernatural power on their Master's part. What I am saying is, that the whole tenor of his discipline, from the first, went to dispossess them of that confident, sanguine, facile temper, which might have impaired their fair estimate of what they saw; to inspire a salutary diffidence and thoughtfulness; to substitute a calm, sedate reason, in the place of impulse; to quiet any impetuosity and turbulence of spirit unfriendly to precise and wary observation.

But, setting aside all this, I say, secondly, that to propose to invalidate the evangelists' testimony by the supposition of enthusiasm, is to suggest a cause not only altogether disproportioned to the effect in degree, but altogether unsuitable in kind. The theory is an indefensible one, because it gives no account of the phenomena. There are delusions which enthusiasm can create; there are others which are utterly beyond its power; and to the latter class belong those supposed in the case in question. If a man tells me that he has received a direct communication from heaven, that he has been shone upon with an inward light, I may give him perfect credit for sincerity, I may have not the smallest doubt that he represents things to me as they appear to him, and yet I may yield not the slightest belief to what he says; I may set him down for an enthusiast, and I certainly shall

do so, unless he gives me some better proof than his unsupported word.

The power of enthusiasm may extend further than to erroneous inward impressions. It may possibly cheat the senses, so that they shall give an erroneous report of some momentary external occurrence. If the evangelists had told us of no supernatural incidents of any different kind from that of the voice from Heaven heard in the crowd at Jerusalem in answer to Jesus's prayer, or of the glorious vision seen by them on the mountain of transfiguration, I should not be able to assert, with complete conviction, that an excited state of mind might not have created the impressions which were attributed by them to the testimony of hearing and sight; though, if a large number and variety of marvels such as these were testified to by a person in other respects of sane mind, and if we could see, as in the case of the miracles of Christianity, that they had a use, the difficulty of rejecting such evidence would be great.

But far the greater number of the alleged miracles of Christianity were not of this transient description. Far the greater number were beyond all danger of mistake from this cause. They who believed that Jesus, before their eyes, cured the lame, the blind, the sick, the dumb, the lunatic, could only have believed it because they saw a permanent effect produced. Simon's wife's mother, when cured of a fever, did not remain in her retirement, so as to furnish no means of correcting

any erroneous idea which might have been hastily taken up, of the disappearance of her disease. She "arose immediately, and ministered" to her son-in-law and his guests. The leper, cleansed in Galilee on Jesus's first public preaching there, did not withdraw himself from observation, but "went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter." The demoniac of Gadara, showed himself afterwards, "sitting, clothed, and in his right mind." The man blind from his birth, restored to sight in the temple, presented himself afterwards to meet the scrutinizing inquisition of the Jews. Lazarus, restored to life, became, we read, again an inmate of his former home, where he is said to have sat at meat afterwards with Jesus, and to have been there an object of curiosity to the people, and of resentment to their rulers, on account of the extraordinary attestation borne, by his appearance among the living, to his Master's power.* Nothing is plainer than that such things as these are not within the range of possible delusion. They may be dishonestly asserted; but that is a question we have before disposed of. If honestly, and by witnesses present at the scene, they cannot but be truly asserted. No attempt could be wilder, than the attempt to resolve them into cases of false perception.

I add, that these were cases, and so were most of those of which we read, where a delusion prac-

* *John*, xii. 9 — 11.

tised on one sense, had that been possible, would not have availed, since unavoidably the decision of one sense had to be revised by that of another, the sight by that of the hearing, and *vice versâ ;* and again, that, since we read of not one of these marvels taking place under the inspection of a single witness only, the delusion of one person would not have sufficed; we should be driven, if we adhered to the hypothesis, to the extraordinary supposition of the deception taking effect upon many at the same time.

The apostles of Jesus professed to have not only seen the miracles of their Master, but to have received from him the power of working, and to have actually wrought, miracles themselves. I say, "professed to have actually wrought them." But this expression needs to be somewhat qualified, and it draws our attention to one of the many facts, which show how free the evangelists were from any striving after mere effect in their representations. We read expressly in the charge given by Jesus to the twelve, and afterwards, in similar terms, to the seventy, of their being commissioned by him to do miraculous acts; but we nowhere read in the Gospels of their having performed them, except that, on the return of the seventy, it is recorded that they said, "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through thy name." This, though an incidental notice of the fact, is an explicit one, and only the more explicit and striking for its incidental character; and it gives rise to the

observation, that to imagine a delusion to have existed, in respect to the facts recorded in the Gospels, is to regard these men as having fancied themselves to be capable of working miracles, and to have actually wrought them, when in fact they had never exerted nor possessed such an endowment. To suppose an individual to labor under an error like this as to his own power, is to suppose a simple case of deplorable insanity. To suggest the credibility of a number of individuals being affected at the same time in the same way, is to attempt very bold practice on common sense.

Once more; when the apostles, fifty days after the crucifixion of Jesus, announced themselves at Jerusalem as witnesses to his resurrection, there was one easy way to put the question for ever at rest, had their assertion been false. The Jewish rulers had only to produce the body, and there would have been an end of the scheme. An issue was voluntarily made by the apostles, so perfectly distinct and tangible, as put them completely in the power of their adversaries, had the facts not been on their side.

Why was not the body of Jesus produced? There is only one answer. Because it could not be; because it was nowhere to be found. And why not to be found? The evangelists are ready with their answer to this question. Because it had been "raised, on the third day, by the power of God." The Jews also had their answer. They said, the disciples of Jesus came and stole him

away, while the sentinels slept.* I do not here stop to remark on the utter want of probability of any such failure in vigilance on the part of Roman soldiers, to whom it was death to sleep upon their posts; for I am not now arguing to the point of imposture. But what I say is, that between these two accounts the truth must lie. The body of Jesus, not being producible at the juncture to which I refer, must have been previously disposed of, as the Jewish rulers declared, or else as the evangelists declared. It must have been raised, or it must have been stolen. And both suppositions are alike inconsistent with the hypothesis which we are now discussing. If it was raised, the disciples of Jesus were not enthusiasts and dupes; for then they told the truth. If it was stolen, they were not enthusiasts and dupes, but agents in a very bold and skilful fraud. I do not take up again the question of this latter character being fairly attributable to them, the question of possible imposture having been already fully argued in a former Lecture. The point here under examination is, the possibility of the disciples having been themselves the subjects of deception; and this, I submit, is equally disproved by the account of the resurrection, whether we see cause to put upon it one interpretation or another. If God did not loose for Jesus the pains of death, then his disci-

* *Matthew*, xxviii. 13 — 15.

ples withdrew his body from the tomb; and will any one say, that, when they undertook to do this, and when they had done it, they were dupes to the belief that he had risen by the power of God?

In my last Lecture and the present, I have argued separately against the two suppositions of enthusiasm and imposture; the only suppositions, which, from the nature of the case, can possibly be resorted to, to invalidate the testimony of the early teachers of our religion. I have produced facts, in the first place, inconsistent with the one supposition, and then facts inconsistent with the other. I wish now, in closing the argument, to direct attention to phenomena equally inconsistent with both. I might enlarge the list; but, as there is not opportunity to do so, I select the great instances of the character of the religion, and the character of its author. And I say that it is as utterly incredible as any thing can be, that the conception of either of these should have arisen in the mind of either a Jewish enthusiast, or a Jewish impostor, of the first century of the Christian era. Neither could by possibility have come to imagine the religion, such as it is, through any influences under which his mind had been formed, that is, without supernatural instruction; and neither, under such influences, could possibly have come to conceive the fiction of the character of Jesus, such as that is described. Neither could have so portrayed it, except his sketch were taken from a living model. Under the circum-

stances, the fact of the existence of the representations is a full voucher for their truth.

I am not about to expatiate on the mere excellence of this religion. I shall not affirm, that, from that quality alone, it was beyond the reach of the human imagination, in some advanced stage of human culture; "imagination," I say, not discovery, — that is a different thing, for whatever has been discovered may be proved to be true. If, in this age, when Christianity has long been doing its work, a man whose mind and heart had been trained by it, could possibly be made to forget its existence and history, and then should undertake to sketch out for himself a perfect scheme of doctrine and morality, I shall not assert that his imagination of ideal excellence, in this respect, might not have a close correspondence with what we find in our religion. It may be presumed, that it would have. But that is not the question. The men, who, if they were not supernaturally instructed, struck out, either with a treacherous design or in the reveries of a bewildered intellect, this extraordinary and glorious idea, had not had their minds or hearts trained under any such influences as Christianity exerts to illuminate the one, and rectify the other. They had grown up under a very different discipline. They had been reared under influences, which, when either as impostors they undertook to devise a scheme, or when as enthusiasts they wandered into one, had no fitness whatever to frame the scheme with

which they came before the world, but, on the contrary, must have infallibly guided their minds in a different direction.

If it were worth while, it might be abundantly shown, that, as to human influences, none favorable to the devising of a just system of theology or morals, of such a system as the Gospel exhibits, could possibly have come from the heathen world; but it would not be worth while to argue this here, even if it had not been already made sufficiently manifest by the facts, presented in a former Lecture, relating to that religious ignorance and demoralization of the heathen nations, which called for the revelation of new truth. It would not, I say, be worth while to argue this here; for influences from abroad could hardly be said to have any operation upon those men, to whom, as far as human agency is concerned, the introduction of Christianity is traced. They were men moving in the common walks of life, in the isolated society of Judea; and all that we know of them goes to show that they were so many impersonations of the Jewish style of thought and feeling. So far as they were religious men, they were religious after the Jewish type. Their conscientiousness could only have been moulded in that form. Their devotion was Jewish devotion. Their notions of social and private duty were notions adjusted to the Jewish standard.

This was clearly their position, supposing them to have been honest; and that supposition is, in

this part of the argument, the most favorable one for the opponent; for, if any thing could have prepared them for some improvement in the existing religious system, it must have been honesty, though, considering what prejudices it had to overcome, the influence even of that must have been so small as to be scarcely appreciable. Supposing them to have been dishonest, their position, in respect to the capacity of projecting a better system, was essentially the same; certainly it was no better. Men without integrity are not the persons from whom striking improvements may be looked for, in a theory of religion or of morals. The coarseness of their minds precludes any ability in them for such improvements. But besides, the objects they propose, when they intend to make use of religion for ends of their own, do not lead them to contemplate any such improvements. Their aim dictates to them to study the passions, the prejudices, the plans and expectations (if there be such), of those whom they address, and on these to establish their unworthy empire.

But, in all except confirmation of those fundamental religious truths, which Judaism too had taught, scarcely would it have been possible for the tone of Christianity to be more opposed than it was to the tone of Jewish thought and feeling in the age when it appeared. He who will reject the miracle of Christianity having been sent from God, only chooses in its stead the miracle, not less amazing, — but, on the contrary, far more so, since

there would not be the same adequate causes to account for the latter, — of Christianity having been born, full formed and armed, from the bosom of a society most alien to it in its principles and practices. What a conception is that of the universal parental providence of God; that the Being of Infinite might has a father's care and tenderness for all men! What a vast conception to enter, unsent, any human mind! What an unheard of conception till Christianity made it familiar! But that is not our point. What an impossible conception to form itself in the breast of any Jew; of one of a race, whose great pride and joy were in a rigid and exclusive interpretation of the assurance that God was the Father of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their posterity; who nauseated the idea that the divine favor could be extended to a descendant from any other stock, except he should first do that homage to the ritual of Moses, which would at the same time humble his own pride, and bring a contribution to the pride of those with whom he sought to be associated!

How precise, formal, technical, unspiritual, mean, are the notions of religious duty, which Christianity found at the time and place of its origin! The widened phylactery, the enlarged fringe of the garment, these passed for acts of acceptable devotion; widows' houses might be devoured, provided the length of prayers did but exceed; and the very doctors said, that "whoso sweareth by the temple, it is nothing, but whoso sweareth by the gold of

the temple, he is a debtor," and that if a man will but say of his property, "it is *Corban*," or a consecrated gift, he is dispensed from providing with it for his father or mother. What a heart-religion, on the contrary, how pure, how spiritual, exalted, internal, and superior to all mere formalities, did the Gospel of Jesus enjoin and inspire. How different the one from the other, in respect to the always besetting error of the merit of an austere, and consequently an ostentatious, devotion; "consequently," I say, for the self-denials of austerity have a well-ascertained tendency to compensate themselves with the self-satisfactions of pride. "I fast twice in the week," said the Pharisee, proclaiming in the temple the superabundance of his ascetic virtue. "When ye fast," said Jesus to his disciples, — not so much as directing them to do it at all, — "ye shall not be as the hypocrites, of a squalid countenance. But thou when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face," and arrange all thy attire, as usual, "that thou appear not unto men as fasting, but only to thy Father which is in secret."

In the principles and practices of the narrow-minded, not to say exasperated and vindictive, inhabitants of Palestine in the first century, irrespective of any goodness which was not formed on their own ungraceful model, incensed against all the heathen by whom they had been successively oppressed, where do we see any elements of the expansive, all-comprehending, philanthropy of

that religion, which taught to do to others as we would that they should do to us, and which, in expounding the precept, to love one's neighbour as one's self, made the word *neighbour* to stand for every human being whom one could find or make opportunity to serve? In the mind of the often trodden down, but only, for that, more indignant and fancy-fevered Jew, burning, with the accumulated heats of hope long deferred, for the raising of that standard which was to roll back the bloody tide of conquest upon doomed and quaking Rome, where do we descry the germ of the grand thought of peace on earth, and universal good will among men?

What notion of that effective regimen, by which, like the light touch upon the curb of the headlong charger, or the helm of the careering ship, Christianity regulates the life by placing its check on the elementary movements of the passions and thoughts, is to be found among those, for whose superficial precepts, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not defile," "Thou shalt not steal," a more searching and availing morality undertook to substitute the commands, "Thou shalt not be angry," "Thou shalt not lust," "Thou shalt not covet"? Where, in the popular code of morality of the age of Herod and Caiaphas, where, in the discipline of the Pharisaic and Sadducean schools, do we find any, the faintest, rudiments of that system, which so carefully and urgently enjoins internal purity, and the practice of meekness, forgiveness of injuries,

patience, humility, self-denial, and all the excellent brotherhood of the passive virtues? No; manifestly as well might one expect to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, as suppose, that Jewish minds, in the age when Christianity appeared, could, under any impulse, of fraudulent design, or honest delusive excitement, have matured such fruit as we gather in the Gospel; that they could possibly have originated it at all; that they could possibly have come into a condition to communicate it to us, as they have done, except through a previous supernatural communication of it to themselves. The effect, certainly known to us, was one so certainly out of proportion and congruity with all natural causes, as absolutely to demand the assignment of a supernatural cause for its production.

The same is true in respect to the conception of the character of the author of the faith, into a delineation of which it is not necessary for me to enter, in order to enforce the argument. Here is an example of moral sublimity and perfection, in a human form, and combined (whatever any one may think of the place of Jesus in the scale of being) of human attributes, which, after a lapse of ages, remains unparalleled and unapproached. But that is not the point. Undoubtedly, until the time of Jesus, it was also unconceived of. I say, "undoubtedly," because not only have no traces come down to us, from earlier antiquity, of such a conception, but we do know, on the other hand, the conceptions of virtue which were entertained, and

we know that they were radically unlike this. At the time of the revelation of Christianity, this conception came to be entertained. We know that it did so, because we have the portraitures of it, descended from that age, before us. The portraiture is there; that we know, for we can look at it. The conception was present, to the minds which drew the portraiture; that is a point which needs no proving. How came it there?

The evangelists give us their answer to this question. They say that they drew from a living original. If we accept their account, we admit at once something supernatural; we admit at once a supernaturally formed character in Jesus; for he, as much as they, was, in respect to mere natural advantages, a Jew, and if they, under the mere natural influences of their position, could never have conceived of such a character so as to describe it, no more could he, under the influences of the same position, have conceived of the same character, so as to aim at and acquire it.

If we do not accept their account, if we do not admit that they draw from a living model, it is because we are able to satisfy ourselves that the conception was otherwise within their reach. This is the only alternative. Are we able to satisfy ourselves of this? It is a mere truism to say, that men cannot unaided think out any thing beyond their capacities of thought, any more than they can perform any other miracle; and the capacities of thought of any given individual, or set of men, are

not the possible capacities of any man whatever, but the natural capacities of the individual man or men, modified by their state of culture. We have somewhat ample means of forming a judgment respecting the capacity, for any great invention, of those to whose sketch we owe our knowledge of the moral lineaments of Jesus; we feel somewhat acquainted with them, at least with the most prominent of them, from their own artless references to themselves and one another; and, as to the others, the very fact that they were less prominent, shows us all that we have occasion to know in respect to the case in hand. And as to those who were most conspicuous in the company, — from which it follows that the same thing must, *à fortiori*, have been true as to the others, — we see no reason to suppose, that they were of the small class of men competent or disposed to originate an innovation on the authorized and prevailing modes of thinking.

But, had this all been otherwise, reared as they had been, it would have been equally impossible that, either in connexion with any dishonest endeavour, or in the course of any self-deluding meditations, the conception of such a character as that of Jesus should have been the creation of their minds. The elements for that combination were not there. The expansiveness of the benevolence of Jesus, overleaping all the much regarded barriers of kindred, sect, neighbourhood, and country; its delicacy and tenderness, so contrasted with the hard and coarse sternness of the age, shining out

as it does sometimes with its mild grace through the most majestic displays of his power (as when the evangelist, scarcely seeming to be sensible himself of the pathetic beauty of the trait which he preserves, relates that Jesus, in his thoughtful respect for the claims of the parental heart, when he had raised the widow's son at Nain, "delivered him to his mother," and when he had cured the epileptic child, "delivered him again to his father"); the perfection of the same quality shown in him in his superiority to the sense of injury; his respect for the rights, and his sense of the greatness, of the human soul, lodged in however mean and even polluted a tenement; his sublime spirit of self-consecration and self-sacrifice; the far-reaching grasp of his views into futurity, and of his conviction of the coming triumphs of truth over error, and of good over evil;—which of these was borrowed from the tone of sentiment of the age? for which of them were the evangelists indebted to any thing that they saw around them, or that had come to them through any common channels of thought? And if each novel trait in this conception is so hard to trace to any human source, how much harder to trace so many! And yet more, (for the combination is a thing still quite different from a mere aggregate of the several ingredients), from what source, not supernatural, came the image of such qualities combined in one whole of such perfect symmetry?

"From what source, not supernatural," I ask,

that is, from what human source could it have come? But even this is not narrowing the question nearly enough to do it justice. If there were somewhere human sources from which it might have come, which there were not, the question would still remain, could the country and age of its actual origin have afforded it a natural origin? We must not think of its inventors, if invention it were, as of men who might be, but as real men of that place and time. As such, the Jewish idea of the *Jewish Messiah* would unavoidably have been always urging itself upon their notice. Suppose them impostors, it was that idea that would have served their ends. Suppose them enthusiasts, it was that idea which would have occupied their imaginations. But no two characters could well be more unlike, than that which was associated in Jewish minds with the name of the Messiah, and that which in fact the evangelists depicted.

I referred, in treating formerly of the authenticity of the Gospels, to a further important fact, which I will but allude to here again in a word, in order that we may not forget the material bearing which it has also upon this part of the argument. We have the portraiture of Jesus, not from one hand only, but from four. This character, so original, so unprecedented, necessarily destined, from the peculiarity of its attributes, to manifest itself in forms of action such as the world had not seen, and was little prepared to guess at, so unmanageable therefore in the hands of one writer of fiction,

is described, — I was about to say, but no, it is not described, it is set before us in action, — by four different persons, in a very artless style of writing, but with a vividness and consistency, which, had it been the product of art at all, would have been a specimen of miraculous perfection of art. They present him to us in a great variety of situations, involving (himself and those who approach him considered) a large part of the diversified experience of human life. They represent him as discoursing upon a great variety of topics. Yet, between all these representations, there is a perfect, unbroken, vigorous, life-like unity. There is not a touch of these untutored men, that mars the verisimilitude of the drawing. I should rather say, there is not a touch of either, laboring as they did upon separate resemblances, which is out of harmony with any part of the work of the rest. Such a fact admits of only one solution. If it had been possible, which it was not, that such a novel and magnificent fiction should have been conceived by one, still it was not possible that such a complicated fiction should have been conceived consistently by all.

Having argued, the last time we met, that our witnesses in the Gospels, previously shown to be competent in point of opportunity to know what they undertook to relate, were trustworthy in respect to an honest purpose to tell the truth, I proceeded to show, in the first part of the present Lecture, that it was impossible to suppose them

subject to any delusion, such as, notwithstanding their honesty, would impair their trustworthiness. I then went on to argue, that the religion in question could not, from its nature, have originated, at the time and in the hands from which we have received it, in any natural cause, under any merely human agency or impulse whatever, whether of delusion or imposture; — the converse of which proposition is, that its origin must have been supernatural. And, lastly, I urged the same thing from similar considerations respecting the conception of the character of Jesus; namely, that it could not have been an imagination of those who have depicted it, but must have had a living prototype, and that too of supernatural formation, since the natural influences in action could no more have formed the character, than they could have suggested the idea. It may perhaps be worth while to add, in a word, to my remark on the last topic, the suggestion, that they, who had opportunity for the contemplation of such a character, must, by that contemplation, have been raised equally above the temptation to fraud, and the susceptibility of any enthusiastic delusions; from which consideration we obtain yet another confirmation of their credit, in regard to particulars of their story.

In my next Lecture, I propose to speak of some circumstances of the early diffusion of our faith, as aiding a just estimation of its evidence, heretofore presented.

LECTURE VIII.

RECEPTION OF THE EVANGELICAL TESTIMONY. — RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION.

The considerations presented in my last Lecture, making the final step in the process of reasoning which I had proposed, conducted us to the conclusion, to which all those that had preceded had been tending, that the history contained in the Gospel narratives is true; which is tantamount to another, namely, that the religion of Jesus Christ is a religion supernaturally revealed from God.

It may indeed have happened to us to hear some such remark, as that there is no connexion between a sensible phenomenon and an abstract truth; no connexion, between a miracle and a religious doctrine. But, in any meaning of this statement, in which it would bear upon the point before us, the common reason of men at once rejects it. It would be just as much to the purpose to say, that there is no connexion between the signature of a proprietor, attached to a legal instrument, and the

acres which it conveys. There is no contact, nor sensible connexion of any sort, between them; nor can the signature make the land, nor water it, nor till it, nor build upon it. And yet there is a practical connexion of the most important kind. The signature is the proper and conclusive attestation to the proprietor's purpose and pleasure. It ascertains, for the government of all concerned, what is his meaning and will. So, if I may use such language, a miracle is God's attestation, God's signature and seal, God's certificate of authority. It is plain to common sense that no power can disturb the established order of nature, except that power which originally instituted and has perseveringly maintained it; namely, the power of God.

"Plain," I say, this is "to common sense," unless that common sense have been tampered with by such a theory as that (of heathen origin) resorted to by the Jews of our Saviour's time, rather than not have something to say in opposition to evidence, whose force they were disinclined to own; the theory that evil superhuman beings are capable of exerting such an energy. And even to the application of such a theory, even supposing the theory itself defensible, our Lord's reply presented the insuperable difficulty arising out of a comparison between the nature of his instructions, and the objects which any such beings could possibly be understood to contemplate. "A kingdom divided against itself," said he, "cannot stand; if then Satan cast out Satan, how shall his kingdom

stand?" To observe an act, which it is inconceivable to us should be the fruit of any other agency except the direct agency of God, is of course to be satisfied that God is directly working; and, again, that he should directly work in confirmation of any thing but what subserves his purposes, is as inconceivable as any thing else that could be named.

Whoever, then, is God's instrument to work a miracle, is accredited to us, in so doing, as a special messenger from God; he shows us therein his commission to speak to us with God's authority. This is what a miracle does, and does perfectly. It does not directly prove the truth of a doctrine; an abstract truth must be directly proved, when proved at all, through the steps of a demonstration. But it does directly and unequivocally prove that the person who performs it is a messenger addressing us in God's behalf; that, accordingly, whatever he declares to us, in the execution of his office, is to be taken for God's own declaration. And, this known, we want to know no more, except what his message is; since nothing can be more certain, than that, being the message of God, it must be true; it cannot deceive us. God may tell us, in this way, what we could not have discovered, and, accordingly, could not have proved. It may be presumed, that, when he does tell us any thing in this way, it will be of this description; for, otherwise, there would be no call for such extraordinary operation. But,

inasmuch as he has thus told it, we want, we could have, no better reason for adopting it into our belief. No assurance can be more perfect than what is hence obtained.

I suppose that there can be little need to argue this point, even thus far; nor do I perceive how any words could make it plainer. Before closing this sketch of the general scheme of proof of the divine origin of Christianity, it cannot but interest us to observe how that proof was received when first produced. The judgment of contemporaries, and that of the next following generations, have an important indirect bearing on the question respecting its cogency. If it wrought conviction on none or few of them, we should be tempted to suppose, that, after all, it was not what it appears to us. If, on the other hand, without any alliance with the civil power, but, on the contrary, resisted by its harshest persecution; not borne on in the proud car of military conquest, but pleading, for all the way it made, in the mildest tones of humility and peace; not offering to promote men's worldly interests, but inviting to an abandonment of all that went by the name; not allowing any license of manners, but insisting on a life of the most rigid, self-denying virtue; — if, presenting itself under these discouraging circumstances, and making these uninviting proposals, it yet speedily enlisted numerous converts, and spread itself before long over wide regions of the earth, the fact of such a diffusion affords no unimportant attestation

to the agency which alone can be supposed to have wrought it. The propagation, by the sword, of Mohammedanism, a religion studiously contrived to conciliate appetite and passion, to recommend itself to, and secure an ally in, man's baser nature, is a fact which explains itself. The progress of Christianity, such as we may ascertain it to have been, is hardly to be explained, except on the ground of the validity of the claim to reception which it put forth when it offered itself as God's own errand of mercy to a sinful world.

We should not of course expect, that, except under a coercion, which would be inconsistent with the purposes of a religion (as it would overthrow choice and freedom), Christianity would make an unobstructed way. If it were destined to resemble other great truths in respect to its benefits being realized especially by those who would meet it with a fair investigation, we could not doubt that it would be rejected by numbers of the ill-disposed and wilfully ignorant. Its very purpose was to enlighten ignorance, to conquer prejudice, to rectify moral obliquity. The reason why such a remedy was needed was, that the disease was deep; and, being deep, it was not to be at once expelled; and, needing, of its nature, to be expelled by moral means, means of simple compulsion, the only ones which could at once thoroughly effect the reform, were excluded by the conditions of the case.

The worldly Jew saw urgent worldly reasons for withholding his belief; and this being so, he natu-

rally became a subject for that process (so familiar with men, even not absolutely unprincipled, in all ages), by which the feelings sway the judgment; and so, without pretending even to himself that he perceived how the evidence before him could be disproved, he did not permit himself to look at it quite closely enough to perceive distinctly that it was beyond the reach of refutation. Besides, the notion of a power of superior malignant spirits over nature may have had its real influence over an already reluctant mind; and still more, the character of Jesus was so unlike that of the expected Messiah, as the latter was depicted in the well-defined and passionately cherished expectations of the nation, that it is no wonder that the contrast should perplex and confuse the thoughts, and require some exercise of candor, and of honest readiness to revise one's conclusions (such as is not too common), before the evidence could be reasonably weighed.

With the Gentiles, — while the notion of the reality of magical arts prevailed, and is found in fact to have been urged by their writers of a later time to explain the Christian miracles, — the great fortress of unbelief was contempt. To a great extent, — substantially, there is cause to believe, to the whole extent that they rejected at all, — they rejected, not after examination, but before; and they refused to examine, through their self-complacent conviction, that nothing worthy of examination could come from such a quarter; for

pretensions from Judea to instruct the world, the civilized, tasteful, politic, philosophical Roman world, and especially pretensions from men in that rank of Jewish society to which the apostles belonged, could not but have seemed to cultivated Gentiles, at least, at first sight, the mere extravagance of absurd assumption. And, in fact, the classical writers who have had occasion to refer to Christianity,— Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, — have each, in the few words used by them in relation to it, included some hint that they had been at no pains to understand, and did misconceive, its system. And here occurs the just answer given by Hartley to the remark, which one sometimes hears, that the evidence produced from the early ages respecting Christianity is partial Christian evidence. "A person," he says, "who attended in any great degree to the Christian affairs, if a good man, could scarce avoid becoming a Christian; after which his testimony ceases to be Pagan, and becomes Christian."* The observation is a weighty one, and is equivalent to this; that that cultivated class of society, which furnishes writers, was made up, partly of those who did not speak of Christianity, because they had given no attention to it and had nothing to say, and partly of those who spoke of it, because, having given attention to it, they had been convinced by it, and accordingly wrote as its disciples. The third class, of those who had given attention to it,

* Hartley's *Observations on Man*, &c. Vol. II. p. 119.

and yet were not its disciples, is not found in the first two centuries, with one exception; that is, Celsus.

But, while these considerations account for the fact that Christianity did not achieve, in the period of its early history, all the triumphs that it would have won over the minds of fair and reasonable men, how speedily and extensively on the other hand were those triumphs achieved. When a company of believers met at Jerusalem, a few days after their Lord's ascension, "the number of the names together," we are told, "were about an hundred and twenty;" though it is probable that the actual number of disciples, the fruit of Jesus's personal ministry, was much greater, and that this was only a meeting of a portion, perhaps of the most prominent individuals. The day of Pentecost came, fifty days after the Passover when Jesus was crucified, and "the same day," it is said, "there were added about three thousand souls;" in which number, however, it is not unlikely that we are to include a portion of such, as, having before been led to admit the claims of the religion, now formally attached themselves to the new community. Shortly after, we read that "the number of the men was about five thousand"; and again, "Believers were further added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women; and once more, "The word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests," — a very interesting and

pregnant fact,—"were obedient to the faith." Presently "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and the disciples were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria"; and that their labors in preaching abroad were not fruitless, appears from the notice, a little further on, that the churches,—which of course had been established,—"had rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Already, too, there were disciples at Damascus, in Syria, whom Saul had been sent thither to apprehend, and bring to Jerusalem in bonds.*

A new era in this enterprise of conversion now opens, in the preternatural commission to Peter to offer the message of salvation to the Gentiles; and, Cornelius and his friends having first been recognised as fellow-disciples at Cæsarea,† Antioch next made its contribution of converts from Pagan idolatry,‡ and there we read that "a great number believed and turned unto the Lord," that "much people was added unto the Lord," and that Paul and Barnabas "assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people." These two associates, encouraged by this time to extend their field of labor, next proceeded to visit together some cities of Asia Minor;§ and, through their preaching,

* *Acts*, ix. 2.
† *Acts*, x.
‡ *Acts*, xi. 20—26.
§ *Acts*, xiii, xiv.

"a great multitude," at Iconium, "both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed," and at Derbe they "preached the Gospel," and "taught many." On a second journey into the same region,* understood to have been made in the year 50 of our era, or about twenty years after his Master's crucifixion, Paul found the churches "established in the faith, and increased in numbers daily." On this journey, he crossed the Ægean into the continent of Europe, where, at Thessalonica, a city in the northern district of Greece, "some of the Jews believed, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude;" and what results they were understood to have been just before accomplishing, may be inferred from the outcry there raised by their opponents, "These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also."†

At Berœa, another town of the same district, "many of the Jews believed, also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few." Then at Corinth,‡ many, "hearing, believed and were baptized;" and when Paul, having remained there a year and six months, and then made a short visit to Jerusalem, came and established himself for a still longer time§ at Ephesus on the Ionian coast, there "mightily," we are told, "grew the word of God, and prevailed;" and Demetrius, the head of the party which undertook to arrest Paul's proceedings, felt justified in

* *Acts*, xvi.
† *Acts*, xvii. 6.
‡ *Acts*, xviii.
§ *Acts*, xix.

complaining, that "not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia [that is, taking the word in its narrow sense], this Paul had persuaded and turned away much people." And within this period, considerably less than thirty years after Christ's ascension, Paul, besides his letters, on the affairs of the religion, to churches in single cities of Asia Minor, had found occasion to address them to Christian communities in the island of Crete, at Rome, and in the province of Galatia; and in one of them, he speaks of the Gospel having been preached "in all the world," and to "every creature which is under heaven,"* expressions, which, how figurative soever they may be esteemed, are not figures without a meaning; while Peter also writes to Christians "dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."†

I have not hesitated to take these notices from books, the authenticity of which it has not fallen in with the scope of this argument formally to prove, because probably no one would think of discrediting the mere common historical notices they contain, and because all that they contain, respecting the extent of the early propagation of the faith, is no more than is needed to bear out the unquestioned statements of later writers, as to the number of converts in the succeeding times. And it is to be remembered that they relate to a

* *Col.* i. 6, 23. † 1 *Peter*, i. 1.

part only of what was done within the period, and so are to be taken but as a specimen of the whole; it is, for the most part, but a portion of the labors of one apostle only, Paul, that is treated in the record, while the rest of the company were, no doubt, employed in the same manner in other spheres.

Passing to later writers,* we find Tacitus, in reference to a time in the reign of Nero, thirty years after Christ's ascension, and six years after Paul's Epistle to the Romans, saying that, when the Emperor undertook to persecute the Christians, "a vast multitude" of them were discovered at Rome. About fifty years later, Pliny, consulting the Emperor Trajan respecting the manner of treating the Christians of his government, says, that the subject "is especially worthy of attention, on account of the number of persons who are brought into danger. For," he continues, "many, of all ages, of every rank, and of both sexes, are arraigned, and will be. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country." Justin Martyr, in a writing dated a little more than a hundred years after the time of Jesus, and already quoted in an earlier part of these remarks, said, "There is not a nation, either of Greek or barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes, and live in tents, amongst whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the Universe,

* See above, pp. 91, 92.

by the name of the crucified Jesus." Tertullian, fifty years afterwards, uses this language; "If we were disposed to act in open hostility to you, and not with secret malice, should we want numbers or resources? . . . . . We are but of yesterday, and we have filled your cities, islands, towns, the camp, ... the palace, the senate, the forum."* Again he says; "There are subjects of Christ among the Moors and Getulians, in all the borders of Spain, several nations of France, and parts of Britain inaccessible to the Romans, the Sarmatians, Dacians, Germans, and Scythians"; † and in another place; "So great a multitude are we, that in every city we form almost a majority." ‡ Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian's contemporary, testifies; "The doctrine of our Master . . . . . is spread throughout the whole world, converting every nation, and village, and city, both of Greeks and barbarians, both whole houses and separate individuals of those who have heard it, having already brought over to the truth not a few of the philosophers themselves. . . . . From the first preaching of our doctrine, kings and tyrants, governors and presidents, with their whole train, and with the populace on their side, have endeavoured with their whole might to exterminate it; but it flourishes more and more." § Origen, thirty years later, asks this question; "Would Jesus, desiring to disseminate

* *Apol.* § 37. (p. 33. edit. Rigalt.) † *Advers. Jud.* § 7. (p. 212.)
‡ *Ad. Scap.* § 2. (p. 86.)
§ *Stromata*, Lib. vi. juxta fin. (p. 698. edit. Paris.)

his doctrine, have been able, without God's help, to effect so much within these few years, as that, in numerous parts of this our world, he should have won to his truth numbers of Greeks and barbarians, numbers of men wise and ignorant, and have established such an influence over their minds, that, — a thing hitherto unheard of in respect to any other religion, — they should be willing to contend to the death for their faith, rather than abjure their Master?" *

Eighty years after Origen, and less than three hundred years after its first promulgation in the obscure capital of the Jews, Christianity became, under Constantine, the religion of the empire; and if this was but a political movement in the Emperor, it shows what is only the more to our purpose, namely, that the Christians had become a party of great power in the state.† As to the character, too, of the early converts, one fact is significant. St. Jerome gives a list of no less than sixty-six Christian writers before the year 306, and nearly as many more between that time and the end of the century;‡ and several of

* Origen, *contra Cels.* Lib. I. (Opp. Tom. I. p. 344.)

† "There is the strongest reason to believe, that, before the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, the faith of Christ had been preached in every province, and in all the great cities of the empire."—Gibbon's *History*, &c. cap. 15. (juxta not. 153.) Every reader observes the unsuccessful dexterity with which Gibbon endeavours to elude the evidence respecting the number of disciples at that period, which after all he does not venture to estimate by conjecture at less than "a twentieth part of the subjects of the empire."—Ibid. (juxta not. 183.)

‡ *Proleg. in Catal. Script. Eccles.* Opp. (ed. Erasmi. Vol. I. p. 260.)

these were voluminous authors, though the works of most are now lost.*

What is to be said of this extraordinary revolution, — extraordinary in its extent, its suddenness, and the difficulty of the work it undertook to accomplish on the mind of each of its subjects? If we say, that the apostles, while they lived, and others who, with only natural endowments, succeeded to their trust after their departure, were able to satisfy those whom they addressed of the truth of those transactions of which we read in the Gos-

* Part of Gibbon's reluctant testimony on these points is as follows; "As the humble faith of Christ diffused itself through the world, it was embraced by several persons who derived some consequence from the advantages of nature or fortune. Aristides, who presented an eloquent apology to the Emperor Adrian, was an Athenian philosopher. Justin Martyr had sought divine knowledge in the schools of Zeno, of Aristotle, of Pythagoras, and of Plato. . . . . Clement of Alexandria had acquired much various reading in the Greek, and Tertullian in the Latin, language. Julius Africanus and Origen possessed a very considerable share of the learning of their times; and, although the style of Cyprian is very different from that of Lactantius, we might almost discover that both these writers had been public teachers of Rhetoric. . . . . Nor can it be affirmed with truth, that the advantages of birth and fortune were always separated from the profession of Christianity. Several Roman citizens were brought before the tribunal of Pliny, and he soon discovered, that a great number of persons of 'every order' of men in Bithynia, had deserted the religion of their ancestors. His unsuspected testimony may, in this instance, obtain more credit than the bold challenge of Tertullian, when he addresses himself to the fears as well as to the humanity of the Proconsul of Africa, by assuring him, that, if he persists in his cruel intentions, he must decimate Carthage, and that he will find among the guilty, many persons of his own rank, senators and matrons of noblest extraction, and the friends or relations of his most intimate friends. It appears, however, that, about forty years afterwards, the Emperor Valerian was persuaded of the truth of this assertion, since, in one of his rescripts, he evidently supposes that senators, Roman knights, and ladies of quality, were engaged in the Christian sect."—(Ibid. juxta not. 190.)

pels, the problem is solved. We can understand how men should be willing to give up every earthly good, and defy every earthly evil, with a view to a treasure in heaven, if they could be satisfied, as sufficient evidence for our religion would satisfy them, that such would be the compensation of the sacrifice. We can understand that they should accept the religion with its burdens, and its hazards, and its losses, provided sufficient evidence was adduced to show them that God had wrought supernaturally to attest it, and that accordingly it was from him. And otherwise we cannot understand that they should do so.

The elegant author of the "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" presents, under a thin veil of irony, what he calls the *secondary causes* of the spread of Christianity, but what every reader sees that he intended to set forth as the true causes of its having prevailed, without any better foundation to sustain it. His list of such causes, which I present in his own language, is as follows; "1. The inflexible, and, if we may use the expression, intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit, which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses; 2. The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth; 3. The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church;

4. The pure and austere morals of the Christians; 5. The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman empire."*

Now I have scarcely any objection, beyond what would reach to the alteration of a few words, to the mention of these as efficient causes of the rapid spread of our religion. But I would call attention to a fallacy which vitiates the whole statement, as to the object for which it was made. The representation, or the clear intimation, is, that these were original causes, which they were not, nor could be. They were themselves effects; effects of something, without which they would either not have existed, or else (that is, existing as effects of other causes than this) would have been wholly inoperative; and that something was, the sufficient supernatural evidence of the divine origin of our religion. The causes here enumerated are traced no further back, than to the impulses, under which the early preachers of the religion acted, the doctrines which they offered, the character they exhibited, and the institutions they set up. The question is not touched, what brought them under such impulses; what satisfied them of the truth of such doctrines, and enabled them to satisfy others; what formed in them such a character; what disposed them to arrange such a discipline. The account which proposes to explain the conversion of great part of

* *History*, &c. chap. 15 *ad init.*

the world to Christianity, unsatisfactory in other respects, is especially so in this; that it substantially leaves out the case of the early and active converts, of those who adopted it with no examples before them, and who did, hazarded, and suffered most in consequence of its adoption.

The justness of this remark will, I believe, speak for itself; but a few words on particular parts of the representation may not be superfluous. That proselyting "zeal," to which, standing at the head of the catalogue of causes, so much efficacy is ascribed, how came it, in the first place, to be excited? and then, supposing it to be excited, how much of all that it did effect could it have effected by its own unsupported earnestness?

How came it to be excited? It would be impossible, nor does even the writer in question pretend, to represent this zeal, so far as it was an impulse to active proselytism, as being a continuation of a Jewish habit of thought or feeling. The Jews held the Gentiles in too much dislike and contempt, to care about making converts from their ranks; and the language of our Lord, where he speaks of the Pharisees compassing "sea and land to make one proselyte," is properly to be understood of their busy endeavours to attach their own fellow-citizens to their own particular sect, and not to convert foreigners to the Jewish faith. Who ever heard of a Jewish missionary going out on distant, and toilsome, and perilous journeys, as we read in the Acts that Paul did, and as we

learn from ecclesiastical history, was done by others of the apostles, to make converts in foreign countries? What was it, I ask, that so changed his habit, and that of his associates, in this respect? What was it that so kindled their zeal, as to prompt them to take their life in their hand, and go forth on such an enterprise? We give a complete answer to this question, when we say, that it was a profound conviction, on their own minds, — such as only ample evidence, exhibited to their minds, could have created, — of the truth that Christianity was a message from God, which ought at all hazards to be published to man. This is the Christian's answer. Let him who rejects it see if he can find another of any speciousness. And, again; allowing the zeal from any cause to have been kindled, what effect could it have produced, without offering something better to convince with, than its own ardor? What impression, acting alone, could the zeal of a few wandering fishermen and laborers have been expected to make on the scoffing philosophy, the intense worldliness, the idolatrous fascinations, the enormous wickedness, of Rome? The zeal was good, as impelling to a faithful exhibition of that previous "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," by which our religion had been attested. Independent of this, it had no conceivable efficiency.

"The doctrine of a future life," in Christianity, is named as another of the causes of the rapid diffusion of that faith. The doctrine of a future

life did become powerfully attractive and convincing. But why? For the best possible reason; because it was now for the first time proved. It had been long before a subject of curiosity and discussion, as was shown at large in another part of this argument; and it would have done no more for Christianity than it had before done for any school of philosophy which had broached it, if Christianity, like them, had only been able to treat it as matter of inquiry and conjecture. Nay; but that Christianity was able to show that it spoke with a divine authority on the subject, it could only have been received with the greater derision for containing this doctrine, as an attempt of unlettered men to answer a question which philosophy had found insoluble. And, as to the further remark, designed apparently to imply more than it expresses, that the doctrine of a future life was "improved in Christianity by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth," nothing is more remarkable, as to the manner in which Christianity announces it, than that it is not improved or embellished by additional circumstances. There is a way to make that doctrine powerfully attractive; but it is a way which Christianity has absolutely avoided. It is, to give such descriptions of the scenes of futurity as a fraudulent imagination easily conceives, and a mystical imagination easily wanders into. Mohammedanism, accordingly, has invited votaries by its delineations of a voluptuous

paradise. Christianity has shown its different origin by being truer to its solemn office. One is led even to ask the question, why it is, that so little satisfaction is given by this religion to so natural a curiosity; a question to which, I conceive, the answer would not be far to seek, but it does not belong to this place.

As to the pure, and what are called the "*austere* morals of the Christians," doubtless, while, in the case of the vicious mass of society, such morals would be only repulsive, from the better class of minds they would attract reverence and esteem. But even this would have no great tendency to go further. It would have no efficacy to enforce belief in a new religious system, which no warrant was given for believing, and which, if professed, must be professed at heavy cost. And again the question returns, What formed these pure morals? What raised up this eminently virtuous society in the midst of a world lying in wickedness? What induced a set of men to abandon their former courses, and betake themselves to a life of rigid, laborious, self-sacrificing endeavour? The answer, and the only answer which can be maintained, to that question, is, that, on the ground of the same facts which ought to satisfy us now, the early converts were satisfied that Christianity was from God; and that accordingly they took care to act on that persuasion.*

* Also; no one knew better than this writer, who has found a cause of the rapid diffusion of Christianity in the strict morals of its disciples, that

"The miraculous powers, ascribed to the primitive church," it is said, constituted one of the causes of the rapid spread of the institution. Nothing can be truer. And how came the miraculous powers to be ascribed? Why were miracles believed to have been wrought? Simply because they had been wrought. It is making a bold demand on credulity, to suggest that such things were admitted as true, without what was considered, at least, as good evidence of their reality, by men, who, if they believed, had to pay such a price for their belief. Give us the truth of the miraculous narratives for the cause, and the effect, the belief in them, becomes an intelligible thing. Take it away, the effect remains without any tolerable explanation.

And the same is obviously true, respecting those institutions, to which, as one more cause, Christianity is supposed to have owed its advancement. The institutions of the church had no authority, and could have no influence, independent of that of the community to whose organization they belonged. That community had adopted them for the promotion of its objects; but those very objects could have had no existence, except as they were brought into being by that persuasion of a special interposition of God in men's behalf, which, however in these different days it may be,

the credit of such morals was falsely denied them, and that the most baseless calumnies against their character presented one of the chief obstacles against which their faith had to struggle. But of this, more hereafter.

could not possibly then have been lightly taken up. The community once gathered, no doubt the organization adopted by it enabled it to act with increased efficiency. But what gathered the community? What made the organization possible, dictated its form, sustained its permanency, pervaded it with life? These are questions which look further back than to any problem, that merely human agencies explain.

There is a short course of remark of Bishop Butler, so appropriate to this place, while it is so condensed as not to admit of abridgment, that I will give it in his own words. "I suppose," says that admirable reasoner, "it will readily be acknowledged, that the generality of the first converts to Christianity must have believed its miracles; that, as, by becoming Christians, they declared to the world they were satisfied of the truth of those miracles, so this declaration was to be credited. And this their testimony is the same kind of evidence for those miracles as if they had put it in writing, and these writings had come down to us. And it is real evidence, because it is of facts which they had capacity and full opportunity to inform themselves of. It is also distinct from the direct or express historical evidence, though it is of the same kind; and it would be allowed to be distinct in all cases. For, were a fact expressly related by one or more ancient historians, and disputed in after ages; that this fact is acknowledged to have been believed by great numbers of the age

in which the historian says it was done, would be allowed an additional proof of such fact, quite distinct from the express testimony of the historian. The credulity of mankind is acknowledged; and the suspicions of mankind ought to be acknowledged too, and their backwardness even to believe, and greater still to practise, what makes against their interest. And it must particularly be remembered, that education, and prejudice, and authority were against Christianity, in the age I am speaking of. So that the immediate conversion of such numbers, did that stand alone, is a real presumption of somewhat more than human in this matter."*

I have thus, not in the measure of its demands, but in the very different one of my own slender ability, executed the task, in the prosecution of which this intelligent audience have honored me with their attention.

In my first Lecture, introductory to the whole subject, after stating the question presented for our consideration as being this, Whether, in the religion of Jesus, we may rely upon having a trustworthy exhibition of the religious relations, duty and prospects of man, I proceeded to point out the distinction between the internal and external evidences adduced in its behalf (with a view to show that what is sometimes called evidence has no title to the name); to expose the incorrectness of the idea,

* *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed*, &c., Part II. chap. 7. (p. 317. Edit. Bost.)

that the external or historical evidence is of a nature unsuitable to effect the purpose of evidence, that is, conviction, with the mass of men; and lastly, to establish, on New Testament authority, the point, that our religion was understood by contemporaries to appeal, and did in truth appeal, to the miraculous works of its author and his ministers, as substantiating the fact of its being a direct revelation from God.

The second Lecture was employed with arguments to show, first, that miracles are credible events, provided the circumstances, under which they are alleged to have taken place, are ascertained to have been such as might probably engage the divine benevolence to address men in the way of an extraordinary interposition; and, secondly, that human testimony to their having been wrought under such circumstances becomes credible, as it would be for other transactions, in the proportion of its clearness and strength.

These propositions having been maintained as true only in the contemplation of certain reserved conditions, the object of the third Lecture was to show that the condition contemplated in the first of them had actually occurred; — that is, that, first, at the time of the original publication of Christianity, the world was in a state of extreme religious ignorance and moral debasement, from which there was no human hope whatever of either speedy or eventual extrication; that, secondly, the circumstances were such as, humanly speaking,

authorized the assurance that a revelation of new religious truth, if now made, would not prove to be made in vain; and that, thirdly, Christianity, as we have it, is manifestly such a religion as was suited to remedy the existing evils; from all which the conclusion was, that, at the period in question, an exigency in fact existed, in which it was reasonably to be hoped that the divine benevolence would interfere, with superhuman operation, to introduce such a religion as Christianity actually is.

The way being thus cleared for the positive evidence, the question respecting the nature and amount of that evidence next came up for consideration. And, the first step here being necessarily to ascertain who they are on whom we rely for testimony on the subject, and what opportunities they possessed for competent information, we engaged in the inquiry respecting the genuineness, in the first place, and the integrity, in the second, of the evangelical records ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and we looked at the grounds of ancient testimony, and of internal marks, authorizing the persuasion, that those compositions were the productions of the persons who bore those names, two of them apostles and confidential companions of Jesus, and two of them disciples associated with the apostles in their labors, and that their writings had descended to us in a substantially uncorrupt state, without addition or interpolation. These investigations occupied two Lectures, the fourth and fifth.

Having thus the testimony before us, and having ascertained it to have proceeded from persons, competent to give it, as far as competency depended on mere opportunity for correct information, we proceeded next to ask whether we could depend upon them as having told the truth. This question divided itself into two parts; whether they meant to tell the truth; and, if so, then whether they can be supposed to have failed to tell it through any misapprehension or delusion. The former of these two inquiries was conducted in the sixth Lecture, in which were exhibited the insuperable difficulties attaching to the hypothesis, that the first preachers of our religion designed to propagate an imposture, while the latter of them was instituted in the seventh Lecture, wherein I pointed out some phenomena, no less irreconcilable with the supposition of enthusiasm having either existed, — or (supposing it to have existed) having been capable of doing what is ascribed to it in the objection, — than other phenomena had before been shown to be with the supposition of fraud; from which I went on to argue, that others yet, — as the representations of the character of Jesus and of his religion, impossible inventions in that country and time for either a fraudulent or an excited mind, — were equally inconsistent with both theories, resorted to in the attempt at contradiction of the truth of the evangelical narratives.

My object in the present Lecture has been to confirm the conclusion of the truth of these narratives

through the consideration of their early, rapid, and extensive reception as true, on the part of men contemporary with the first preaching of the religion, and men of the time immediately following, who had the best opportunities for correct information, and who were influenced to the forming of a right judgment upon the evidence by all motives, — certainly influenced against forming a too favorable judgment by all worldly motives, — which can possibly sway the mind of man; and I have added remarks to show, that the causes, which have been alleged by the highest skeptical authority as accounting for the extraordinary diffusion of the faith, can be reasonably regarded in no other light than as themselves effects, requiring a cause, in the reality of the transactions recorded in the Gospel narratives, to explain their own existence. That the claims of Christianity were extensively admitted soon after its publication, and this in the face of formidable obstacles, is an undeniable historical fact. It is *the great fact* in the history of man. Something led to that important result. Something brought it about; something must explain it. I have endeavoured to show that nothing could have brought it about, that nothing can explain it, except a thorough conviction, on the part of those who adopted it, of the sufficiency of the evidence on which it founded itself; and that, under the circumstances, nothing can account for the existence of that conviction, except its justness.

The inference from the whole argument is, *that*

the Gospel history is true; which is but to say, in other words, that the religion offered us in the Christian scriptures comes to us by supernatural revelation from the Sovereign of the Universe, the Maker, Benefactor and Judge of men, the Father of life and light. It reveals itself to us of this age in some different aspects from what it could assume to those to whom it first addressed its claim; and the consequence is, that we see, in some respects better than they could do, the permanency and the thoroughness of its adaptation to the wants of humanity. Systems of human device in time become obsolete. The world outgrows them. Manners and thought pass by them. Christianity is still the former of manners, the quickener of thought, the principle of reform, in the world, as much as it was on the day that its meek but potent voice was first lifted up in Judea. No new exigency of human affairs has arisen, that it has not stood ready with the new light and direction required. No new observation has been made on the conditions of life, no discovery of what rightly follows from the relations of man, but has corresponded with and illustrated what this searching religion had already declared respecting his place and obligations. Commerce has taught nations to know each other; Christianity, as the chain of what admitted of being a mutually ruinous intercourse has lengthened, has taught them to know each other as brethren. Popular institutions have grown up, instead of the old despotisms; Christianity has taught men still to cultivate a

mutual respect and love, instead of the oppressive spirit on the one side, and the servile spirit on the other, that had been abandoned, or the angry, violent, and rapacious jealousy, that, without its intervention, might, under the existing circumstances, have been expected to take their place. Intellectual culture has advanced; Christianity has impressed a new sense of the worth of all real accomplishments that might be acquired, by showing them to be the gains and improvements of an immortal essence. Its day of glory is not yet. Other times are to witness its most conspicuous triumphs. But already has history emphatically told how different in the permanence of its triumphs and the beneficence of its working, from any device of human wit, or effort of human energy, is that which its apostle called "the wisdom of God, and the power of God, to every soul of man that believeth."

COURSE II.

SURVEY OF THE JEWISH, PAGAN, AND DEISTICAL *A PRIORI,* OBJECTIONS.

LECTURE IX.

PARTIAL SUCCESS OF THE FIRST PREACHING OF CHRISTIANITY.

Those of my present audience, who listened to the Lectures read here last winter, on the subject which in a different view I am now to resume, will remember that I then took a general survey of the argument for the divine origin of the religion of Jesus Christ. I began with some remarks upon the distinction between what are called the *internal* and the *external* evidences for that religion, with a view to ascertain the respective provinces and mutual relations of those two kinds of proof, to show the vagueness and impropriety of the phrase *internal evidence* as we hear it sometimes applied, and to refute the error that external evidence, being concerned with historical facts, is unsuitable to produce the effect contemplated upon the minds of the mass of men. I next called attention to the fact, that Christianity expressly rests its claim to credence on the miraculous works of its founder

and his associates, this being the proper guaranty of their commission to bring such a revelation from the God of truth. Whether miracles have a claim to be considered as, first, abstractly speaking, credible events, and, secondly, as capable of being substantiated, to others than eye-witnesses, by means of human testimony, was the next point proposed for consideration. And, the affirmative as to both these particulars having been maintained, — miracles having been shown to be, under certain supposable circumstances, both credible and provable, — the next inquiry was, as to the actual existence of those circumstances, at the time when the miracles alleged for Christianity purport to have been wrought. A survey of the condition of the world at that period, led to the conclusion of its being such, in fact, as to make a direct, and accordingly a miraculous, divine interposition, an antecedently probable event. The way was thus prepared for the inquiry, whether the testimony to the actual occurrence of that event, besides being unobjectionable in point of quality, was sufficient in amount; and thus we were brought to ask who it was that offered that testimony, and whether it had come down to our time the same that it was originally given; in other words, to inquire into the authenticity and integrity of the four Gospels of the New Testament. Proof having been produced, in considerable detail, to the point that those books, now in our hands, contain the original testimony of Mat-

thew, Mark, Luke, and John, persons competent from their position and circumstances to be acquainted with the facts, and to report them correctly, the next step was to show, that they did record, and for us do testify to, those facts honestly and intelligently; honestly, with no purpose to deceive; intelligently, not being themselves the subjects of any delusion; — the inference directly following from all which was, the truth of what they have declared; in other words, the justness of the claim set up by them for the religion they preached, as a message to men, miraculously authenticated, from God. The Course closed with some remarks on the circumstances of the early diffusion of this religion, and on the impossibility of accounting for the progress which it made, by the supposition of a merely human origin.

In proceeding to recall attention to the same general subject, I propose to adopt the plan of passing in review objections which have been made, from time to time, to Christianity, by unbelievers in that religion. It was not received with a universal welcome at the epoch of its original promulgation. It does not enjoy universal credit now. There were infidels at first; there are infidels in this distant modern age. Of course there has been, with all, some cause for their unbelief; and a portion, the reflecting portion, have had some reasons to give for it. These reasons, it is pretty safe to presume, were all the reasons, or, at any rate, were the best reasons, that were

to be had. They ought to be looked at. If they are good, they ought to satisfy us, and make us unbelievers, too. If they are not good, there is a presumption of exceeding strength, that there are none which are so. Among unbelievers, there have been men of acute minds, and these of a variety of other characteristics, qualifying them for the detection of every sort of specious flaws in an argument. Both those of the ancient and of the modern times were under strong motives to exercise their utmost ingenuity against the system they rejected; the former, because of its invasion and disturbance of the existing state of sentiment and order of society; the latter, because of the necessity laid upon them to do their best in justifying the singularity of their position. If, as to the facts of Christianity, there was any thing falsely alleged by its early disciples, its early adversaries were favorably circumstanced for an exposure of the fraud. If in its theory there was any thing indefensible, the progress of intelligence would have aided its later opponents in dragging the error to light.

The kind of review which I propose may correct impressions entertained by some respecting the extent of the resources of infidelity. There exists, I suppose, a vague notion, that the infidel writers have been very numerous, and that their topics of argument have been very various; in other words, that Christianity is liable to a great variety of more or less plausible objections. Many,

I doubt not, on careful observation of the facts, will learn with surprise how small a number, compared with the aggregate, of adventurous thinkers, have signalized their intellectual adventurousness in this field, and to how great an extent this small number have repeated one another; in other words, how limited has been the range of infidel argument, how few topics it relies upon. When repetitions and new combinations of old thoughts are properly estimated, and reduced to their due place in the show, it will be seen that it is very little (compared to what may have been imagined), that infidelity has found to say, when, in truth, it has undertaken to say any thing definite; and an inspection, in one survey, of the positions it has successively occupied, may give us a more vivid perception how exposed and untenable they are, than is afforded by a detailed examination of any number of them at interrupted intervals. A survey of this class of writers, again, will sometimes exhibit them in opposition to one another as much as to the religion which they alike oppose; they will be sometimes seen wresting the desecrated weapons from each other's hands. And, further, facts are in not a few instances supplied to the friend of Christianity, in the form of admissions of its early foes, which, in that form, may be thought more valuable, because more unquestionable, than would be any assertion on the part of its advocates.

I have only further to premise, that, while it

would be unprofitable to undertake to present a list of all the writers who have ever taken ground against Christianity, it will be my purpose to call particular attention to one or more of the most conspicuous in every class of unbelievers (understanding by *class* those who have respectively adopted a similar method of reasoning); and that I shall not intentionally omit to bring forward some representative of every scheme of opposition to Christianity, which has assumed prominence, and attracted attention. In pursuing this method, it will be sometimes necessary to recur to arguments treated, in a different connexion, in my former Course; but, while I shall endeavour to shun needless repetition, I shall the less regret that degree of it which may prove unavoidable, inasmuch as a large portion of those now to be addressed, did not belong to my former audience. The order followed, as being at once the most simple, and on other accounts the most satisfactory and convenient (as exhibiting the progress and alternation of opinion), will be essentially that of chronological succession; though occasionally this will be departed from, for the sake of presenting at once a full view of some system maintained, in different parts, or simply with repetition, by writers of different periods, or for some similar reason.

The ground taken by the Jewish people in justifying their rejection of the religion of Jesus, is naturally the first to attract our attention, as it was to that people that it was first offered, by

one belonging to their own race, and professing to be the personage pointed at in their ancient prophecies.

We observe at once some peculiarities in the relations sustained by them, in their capacity of unbelievers, to this faith. Whoever else might maintain a rejection of it on any theory of alleged incredibility in miraculous operations, this could not be done by them; for they referred their own religion to a miraculous origin. They were already believers in one God, so that the leading trait of the Christian theology could encounter no repugnance on their part. The objection raised against it by some moderns as a partial revelation, communicated only to a portion of mankind, could have no force with them, votaries as they were of a worship expressly restricted to the race of Abraham, and to proselytes who should obtain adoption into that community by the observance of a peculiar ritual. On the other hand, they might be presumed to be in circumstances peculiarly favorable for deciding justly upon the claim made by Christianity to be the completion of what had been begun and foretold in Judaism; and, as it was among them that the religion of Jesus was first preached, they had especial opportunities for detecting any thing of falsehood or weakness in its pretensions. The world looks to them first to bear a testimony, if valid testimony is to be borne in any quarter, to contradict that of the Christian preachers and records. They have always been,

since Abraham's age, a peculiar people. In the worst of times, they have preserved, with great tenacity, their traditions and their records. In those traditions and records it is natural to expect to find, if any where, materials for discrediting what Christians maintain to be the true history of the original miraculous communication of their faith.

What reasons, then, have the Jewish people alleged for the rejection, by the mass of them, of the Jewish Messiah?

As far as concerns the body of the Jews, of the age of our Lord and of his apostles, undoubtedly the true answer to this question is, that they rejected him simply because of their long-cherished prepossessions, concerning the character and offices of the Messiah whom they looked for, establishing in their minds an idea of that personage so widely different from what they saw realized in Jesus. The imagination of the people, through ages of depression and gloom, had been busy upon that exciting subject; and not a few particulars, it would appear, had come to be generally understood as necessary conditions of the manifestation of the Messiah, of which we at this day are unable so much as to point out the source in any interpretation of their scriptures, however fanciful and erroneous. "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" is a question which they are led by one of his miracles to ask. But they forthwith put their awakened minds at rest, by remembering, "Howbeit, we know this man, whence he

is; but, when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." * Here we have evidence of a persuasion, prevailing in some quarters, and not traceable by us to any origin in the Old Testament writings, to the effect, that, when the Messiah should present himself, it should be by some sudden imposing apparition, and without knowledge, on the part of others, of the previous circumstances of his life. And the notion, that on the eve of the Messiah's advent, the prophet Jeremiah should reappear, to disinter the book of the Law, and the two tables of stone, from the hiding-place to which he had committed them at the burning of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, was another current prejudice of the same description. †

But, independently of all such particulars, there is the all-important general fact (altogether unquestionable, as we learn it not only from the Christian, but from the Jewish books), that the Messiah whom the nation was awaiting was a temporal deliverer, a military champion, a mighty and magnificent prince; a wise and religious prince, no doubt, who should do great things for the re-establishment and diffusion of the Jewish worship and faith, but still one, whose primitive and specific office should be, to break the dreaded Roman yoke, and "restore again the kingdom to Israel." While, by many, the proofs which Jesus gave of being invested with divine authority were seen to be so decisive,

* *John*, vii. 27. † *Matthew*, xvi. 14; comp. 2 *Macc.* ii. 4 — 8.

that they were able to dismiss this unfounded prepossession, and became his disciples, with others the evident contrariety between his character and objects, and those which their minds had ascribed to the Messiah, created, from the first, an absolute indisposition and disqualification for weighing any evidence offered in confirmation of his claim; while yet another class attached themselves to him for a time, in the hope of seeing him at length renounce the inconsistency between what he now appeared, and what, if indeed the Messiah, they were sure that he would sooner or later become, but at length, wearied and disgusted with the delay of their hope, and unable to rid themselves of the delusion which had inspired it, they turned back, we read, "and walked no more with him."

But this Jewish objection to Christianity, which actually proved so cogent with the contemporaries of Jesus, was it not also, it may be asked, a reasonable objection? Had not the ancient Hebrew prophets in fact foretold a legislator and soldier; and, if Jesus was neither, did not his claim to be the personage spoken of by them fall to the ground, and that, whether they had spoken with a divine commission or not? Did it not fall to the ground, if they had so spoken, because he did not correspond to their description; and, if they had not so spoken, because he appeared to represent them as having done so?

Upon this subject, of the interpretation of the language of the later prophets, and its rightful ap-

plication to Jesus, my audience are aware that much has been written, to the end of showing the incorrectness of that interpretation of those writings by the Jews, which makes the basis of the prejudice of theirs, now in question. It constitutes a subject by itself, of no small extent; and I do not propose now to take it up, because what there may be opportunity to say upon it will be more in place when we come to consider the views of an English writer, Anthony Collins, whose argument consists of an exhibition of the alleged invalidity of the claim of Christianity to credit, on the authority of the Hebrew predictions. What I am now to suggest, is, that, at all events, that which has been referred to was no reasonable ground of the objection to which it led, no justifiable cause of the effect which was allowed to follow it. If Jesus had really done the works which he was declared to have done, works speaking for themselves as being such as no man could do, unless God were with him, then God was with him; nothing could be more certain; and this conviction could not be confused, in any fair and reasonable mind, by difficulties that might be found in the interpretation of highly poetical descriptive passages in some ancient books.

I am far from saying, that miracles, or any thing else, will prove an individual to be what he is not, or to be fitly described by language which evidently means something else. But to say this, is merely to trifle; for on no theory can it be pretended that a miracle, the act of the God of truth as well as of

power, can ever be wrought in confirmation of a falsehood. A pretended miracle may not in fact have been wrought; and the circumstance that the person, professing to have wrought it, lays claim to a character, which we find a difficulty in conceding to him, may afford us a fair presumption against its having been wrought, as alleged. But it is no more than a presumption. And, if it should become certain to us that it has been wrought, that certainty must be paramount to, and overcome, the objection arising from the inconsistency between the manifest actual character of the worker, and the character which our prepossessions had ascribed to him. If we are right as to the former point, we must have been in some error as to the latter, which, in such a case of interpretation, it is very easy for us to be. He, who brings us that direct attestation from the Divinity which miracles convey, cannot avouch to us a falsehood concerning the character which he bears. If he is not, after all, what we thought he would be, the error must be in our thought; and we are bound to presume, that proper consideration will quiet our scruples by leading us to the source of error, and consolidate our convictions by making them throughout consistent.

Connected with what I have last mentioned was another equally unfounded source of aversion to Christianity on the part of Jews, which practically would operate as a most availing dissuasive from so much as a consideration of its claims. They could not endure the thought of any Messiah, who should

admit Gentiles to the benefits of his institution, without requiring of them a complete submission to the ritual of Moses; and, when they heard that Christians did this (as was the fact from an early period), it seemed to them proof that he, whom Christians served and preached, could not be the true Messiah. That this was a controlling prepossession of the Jewish mind, is a fact familiar to every reader of the Acts and the Epistles, and will be further brought to view in my next Lecture, in quotations from an important writing of the second century.

The consideration of the repulsion arising from this cause, explains to an inquirer of the present day the partial progress made by Christianity among the Jews in the age of its original publication. Upon many minds it would operate to prevent all attention to the claims of Jesus. Their short argument would be; "His followers give out that he is the Messiah. But the Messiah we see that he is not. We know what the Messiah is to be; and there is nothing about this Nazarene, that corresponds to the description. It would be idle, then, to pay any regard to his pretensions." This would be their argument, and an argument altogether without foundation, except in an error of their own, concerning what they had a right to expect.

But, supposing the evidence of the miracles of Jesus to have come to them in some such way that they could not wholly disregard it; suppose it to

have been brought to them in an unquestionable shape by eye-witnesses; or take the case of such as were themselves spectators of his mighty works; still for them there remained an apology for disbelief, which, though not founded in reason, was with them operative in point of fact. "He casteth out demons," they said, "by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons." To us, in this time of clearer reasoning, to believe the supernatural work is to receive that which it accompanies as a supernatural revelation. To us, with our better philosophy, the only worker of real miracles is God; and when he works them, it will be for no less a purpose than to authenticate a message from himself to men. But with the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus it was otherwise. Their false theory of demoniacal agency gave them a resource for escaping the conviction, which the exhibition of miracles ought to have wrought in their minds.

Does any one remark, that, if for them, even through their own error, the proof through miracles was thus enfeebled, it was not the proper proof to be used for their satisfaction, I reply, first, that at any rate it was suitable to attract their attention, and lead them to examine into the foundation of their opinions; and thus it actually availed for the conversion of great numbers. Secondly, I reply, that such evidence as Jesus offered of his mission from God was not intended for that wrongly judging age alone, but for all the coming times, when there should be less, or nothing, of

such error to obstruct its influence. And lastly, and especially, I reply, that the miracles of Jesus, wrought *to substantiate such a doctrine as he preached*, afforded just as cogent an argument for the satisfaction of those who believed, as for those who did not believe, in demoniacal agency, provided they were at the same time persons of integrity and candor; qualities, in the absence of which, of course, all evidence offers itself at great disadvantage. Nothing could be more conclusive and unexceptionable, to a mind not absolutely indisposed to be convinced, than the reasoning actually employed by our Lord to this point. "Suppose demoniacal agency, if you will;" he, in effect, says. "I will not endeavour to disabuse you of that error. But that theory, true or false, has no pertinency to the present question. It cannot fairly avail you to avoid the proof offered to you, in my miraculous working, that I am sent from God. For look at my doctrine. What is it? Look at it, and you see at once that it is not such, as demoniacal agency can be supposed to be interested to support. I do a mighty work, and I ascribe it to the power of the Father, that dwelleth in me. You, reluctant to admit that conclusion, since it would bind you to an obedience you are indisposed to render, ascribe it to the powers of evil. See how your scheme will hold. Is the doctrine, which I produced that work to confirm, such as the powers of evil can be supposed willing to support? because, if not, your scheme, abstractly

sound or otherwise, fails utterly, in this instance, of its application. If you are obliged to own that the doctrine is not such as evil beings can wish to have prosper, then you are obliged to embrace the alternative, namely, that it is the power of God which is working."

This is but a paraphrase of the reasoning actually employed by him. On the occasion of the cure of a blind and dumb man, we read, that "the people were amazed, and said, 'Is not this the son of David?' But, when the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This fellow doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons.' And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself, how shall then his kingdom stand?'" "That cannot be, then," he in effect says; "and, if one side of a dilemma cannot be, the other must be. What is that other side, in the present instance? It is, that I cast out demons by the Spirit [or the power] of God. And, if I do cast out demons by the power of God, then the conclusion necessarily follows, that the kingdom of God is come unto you." This, I say, was an irrefragable argument for such, as, however they might believe in evil supernatural agency, would but compare the doctrine of Jesus with his works wrought for its confirmation. Properly weighed, it could not fail to

satisfy them, that their hypothesis, true or false, had, in the case before them, no applicability, and so to bring them back to the truth of an unequivocal divine interposition. But, though conclusive with minds upright and candid, still it must be owned to be such as permitted prejudiced and averse minds to avoid the conclusion it was fitted to enforce; and so that result, always too common, was, to an unhappy extent, realized among the Jews. The mind, unwilling to be convinced, held back from looking at what would have wrought conviction. In a voluntary blindness to the facts, it found the excuse of its incredulity.

I have been showing, that a peculiar state of mind, hostile to the reception of the Christian faith, existed among the Jews of the apostolic age, with a view to prove that the partial effect, produced upon them by the evidence for that faith, affords no presumption against the validity and sufficiency of the evidence itself. The facts adverted to may be considered important, as the solution of an historical problem; and they afford a fit introduction to remarks which are to be made on the position of that people in later times. But, in the light of an explanation of the rejection of our religion by a great part of those to whom it was originally offered, I do not think that they can be regarded as essential to the argument of the defender of Christianity. It seems sometimes to be presented, as a thing requiring to be accounted for, that, when this religion was first

preached, men, if it was really from God, did not receive it with acclamation. Why so? What is there to authorize us to suppose, that, if really from God, it would of necessity be greeted with such a welcome? The very fact, that men so exceedingly needed Christianity, involved the other fact, that they were not prepared to welcome it. Had they given it more welcome, this would have been proof that they stood in less need of it; and it would have gone, so far, to invalidate the argument (necessary in establishing its miraculous attestation), drawn from the extreme need in which men stood of its aid. The world so urgently needed it, because the world lay in ignorance, in error, in wickedness. Men's foolish hearts were darkened; their conscience slept; their passions held empire; their wills were perverse; they knew not the things that belonged to their peace.

When such was their condition, is the defender of Christianity to be called on either to show that they readily received it, or else to allow that it had no claim to be received? What sort of reasoning is that? Is there any meaning in the phrases, a dull, abused, perverted conscience, moral stupidity, imperious passions, a depraved heart? and when that, which they express, actually in any case exists, is it not of its very nature to repel a pure and sanctifying religion like that of Jesus? Did it exist at the time when that religion was first preached? On a previous occasion I showed at length, that it did; and who doubts it, that knows

any thing of the history of the time? And, if it did, what right has the infidel to call upon the Christian apologist to explain why his religion did not at once command all that submission of men's minds, which, if from God, it had a right to command? How could this have been, unless all the moral tendencies of men, whom God always designs to address as moral agents, were to be reversed? How could the fact have been otherwise than it was? Because men were blind and wilful, and indifferent to their highest interests, they were in desperate want of Christianity; and because they were blind and wilful, and indifferent to their highest interests, they had no sense of the beauty of Christianity when it wooed them; they had no taste for its instruction and guidance when it offered to enlighten and direct them.

How vain is it, every one of but a little experience of life well knows, to say, "This evidence is strong; it cannot reasonably be resisted by any mind; and therefore it will carry universal conviction." No evidence is strong to any mind that will not give it some degree of attention and fair consideration. Explain to the miser, how fit it is on all grounds of justice, humanity, and religion, that he should devote a few farthings, from his vast store which does him no good, to do great good to his suffering brother. Your argument could not be better. It is without a flaw. See how much it will move him. Discourse to the conqueror of the iniquity of his bloody proceedings, and the

superior satisfactions of a life of peace and beneficence. The perfect cogency of your reasonings is unanswerable. He could not be addressed more to the purpose, if one should rise from the dead. Yet you might as well have been speaking to the north wind. It is not an uncommon thing, it is not a thing to be explained, it is not a thing to throw suspicion on some other thing, that men remain not convinced when they are predetermined not to be. It is, on the contrary, a thing, of the most frequent and familiar occurrence ; and the wonder rather is, when conviction is wrought upon a person addressed in this state of mind. Says the satirical poet,

> " He, who's convinced against his will,
> Is of the same opinion still."

At all events, the reluctant mind easily finds expedient and apologies for incredulity. When proofs stare it full in the face, it will conjure up some phantom with which to confront them, and cheat itself with the delusion that it has raised a substance, or be content to have its perceptions obscured by the cloud. But it will prefer to avoid so near an approach. It will choose rather not to see what, seen, it might not know how to dispose of, and will slightly feel and easily subdue any occasional visitings of self-reproach for not being convinced by what it has never contemplated close at hand. So that, though I have adverted to the pleas, which the unbelieving Jews of the apostolic

age were wont to make when they made any, it really no more concerns the defender of Christianity to account for their unbelief, than it does to account for that very common phenomenon, the refusal of men to assent to and embrace what they cannot with any reason contradict.

Within the lifetime of one, and probably more, of the apostles, Judea was overrun by the Roman armies, many of its inhabitants were dispersed into other countries, and the city and temple of Jerusalem were levelled with the ground. Under these circumstances, the afflicted race clung more closely to their faith and to one another; and it appears probable, also, that henceforward they received comparatively little attention from the preachers of Christianity, engaged in their greater work of evangelizing the Gentile world. The communication between the parties being thus in a great measure interrupted, the hostility of the Jews took a natural way to perpetuate and embitter itself, and to prevent further apostasies from Judaism to the new faith. The dictate of prejudice and passion probably, — of policy, certainly, — was to make Christianity odious by charging its adherents with enormous vice and crime. Among the merely natural causes referred to in explanation of its early progress, we have seen one to be, the remarkable moral purity and religious temper of its disciples. But the observer must have come near to Christians, near enough to know what they really were, before the attraction of their

superior morals and the beauty of their piety could have opportunity to act upon him for his conversion; and the calumnies early in circulation respecting them, originating, as appears, with the Jews, who pretended to know them best, were a great discouragement to him from coming thus near.

The device of obstructing the extension of an opinion or a sect by maligning its disciples, is one of easy suggestion, and of great antiquity; and, strange to say, the early Christians, whose immaculately pure directory of conduct is in our hands, whose conduct, as far as we have means of knowing, corresponded with great suitableness to their profession, and who, by a sagacious unbeliever of modern times who would account for the progress of their faith by the operation of natural causes, are said to have won over opposition by the charm of their heavenly-mindedness, loveliness of spirit, and heroic self-sacrifice, — these Christians appear to have been brought to the necessity, at the period immediately succeeding the apostolic age, of defending themselves against charges of the grossest irreligion and profligacy. This was the ever ready weapon with which the unbelieving world protected itself against the spiritual force that sought to renovate and redeem it. The Christians told their simple story, showed how they knew it to be true, and offered themselves to death in confirmation of the truth of their report, as often as the malice of their enemies so willed.

Numbers listened, were convinced, and joined their holy company. Other numbers heard the hard names by which they were called, and, supposing the injurious representations to be well-founded, or entertaining no opinion on the subject, nor disposed to the trouble of forming one, but indulging a natural repugnance to a sect every where so spoken against, remained in unbelief for want of the knowledge which they did not seek.

In short, — and this remark involves a very pregnant negative, — in that early age, when availing charges against the truth of Christianity, if there were any well-founded ones, could have been easily substantiated, what we chiefly find, in the way of objection, is, appeal to popular odium; vague, and, as we well know from all credible sources, utterly unfounded calumnies against the character of its disciples; charges against the men, which if they had been true, would have been a circuitous way of refuting the doctrine, but which were still more untrue than they were irrelevant; charges, therefore, of that nature, which discredit not the cause which they assail, but the cause in behalf of which they are pleaded, — showing, as they do, at once its hearty purpose to inflict injury, and its want of the proper means. "Three sorts of crime," said Athenagoras, in the second century, "are charged upon us by scandalous rumor; atheistical impiety, feasting upon human flesh, and incest."* Some had it, that they worshipped an ass's

* Athenag. *Legat.* § 4, (p. 15. edit. Oxon.)

head, and even more unworthy objects; some, that they practised magic. The heathen antagonist of Minucius Felix, in the third century, speaks of the story as every where current, that, when they initiated novices, they put a child to death with many ceremonies, and then licked its blood, and tore apart its limbs; and refers to their shameless promiscuous impurities, as being equally notorious.* That they were pursuing treasonable designs against the government, was a common slander; and the more pious sort of patriots accounted for public disasters by viewing them as tokens of the displeasure of the gods, provoked by the atrocities of the Christians.

Such calumnies, as has been said, though they spread widely among the Gentiles, appear to have originated with the Jews. Says Justin, in the second century, addressing that people; "No other people are so unjust to us and Christ as you, who have caused the prejudices of others against the Just One and us his followers..... For after you had crucified him ..... you sent out chosen men from Jerusalem into all the earth, saying that an atheistical sect, called Christians, had appeared, thus spreading those evil reports concerning us, which all who are ignorant of us now repeat."† And again, in the same treatise; "After you had heard that Jesus was risen from the dead, as I said before, you sent forth chosen men into all the

* Minuc. Felic. *Octavius*, § 9, (pp. 96—101, edit. Lug. Bat.)

† *Dialog. cum Tryph.* pp. 170, 171, (edit. Thirlb.)

world, giving out that a wicked and atheistical sect was risen. . . . . Moreover, they gave out that he taught those impious and wicked and impure things, which you every where charge upon those who confess him to be the Christ and their Master."*

From the time, that, since the triumphs and establishment of Christianity, it has become necessary for the Jews, if they expected to be heard at all by Christians in opposition to their faith, to assail it with argument, and not with obloquy, their topics of argument have been substantially three.

They have urged, in the first place, that their Law was designed to be a permanent institution, and that accordingly a believer in its divine origin must reject that of the religion of Jesus, inasmuch as the latter professes to supersede the former, and especially does not adopt the ritual code, which made so much of the substance of the system ; — an averment, which of course a Christian will meet by saying, that a just interpretation of the records of the Law shows that it was not intended for a perpetual institution, but furnishes its own satisfactory evidence to the contrary, and, further, that it is impossible to regard the Jewish system as having been intended to be permanent, as God's only direct revelation to man (unless one is prepared to maintain that only a small portion of the race was destined ever to be enlightened by revelation), because that system was evidently

* *Dialog. cum. Tryph.* pp. 368, 369.

designed for only a single political community, and that of limited extent.

Secondly; the Jewish apologists have maintained, that the theology of Christianity is not that of Judaism, so that he who adopts the latter must needs reject the former, and with it the pretensions of him who teaches it; in other words, that the triune God of the New Testament is not the one undivided Deity of the Old, and that accordingly a Jew must set down a Christian as an idolater; — an argument, which Christians meet in one or the other of two ways, agreeably to their respective methods of interpreting the New Testament records; the greater number, by maintaining that a Trinity in Unity is the God of both the Old and New Testaments, and others, on the opposite ground, that the doctrine of one God in one person is the doctrine of both, but all undertaking to show, that, in this respect, there is no contradiction between the two systems.

Once more; the Jews have maintained, that our religion and its author do not correspond to the supernaturally authorized descriptions of the Messiah and his discipline in the ancient prophetical books; another error, which different classes of Christians refute in different ways, according to their different understanding of Scripture language in the passages thus brought into question.

These three, I say, have been the principal grounds of Jewish objection, when argument has been deliberately held, the questions respecting the

more direct and positive evidences of our religion having taken a less prominent place in that controversy. In the present Lecture I have proposed no other object, than to explain that state of the Jewish mind, which, at the first promulgation of Christianity, obstructed its wider spread among that people, together with the kind of opposition to which it immediately prompted, and the direction which it gave to the course of argument at that later time, when it became necessary for argument, and not vituperation nor violence, to be the resort of Jewish unbelief. In my next Lecture, I am to proceed to specify the course of argument of some individual Jewish opponents of Christianity in ancient and modern times. From no other quarter, provided there existed any valid objections to the claims of our religion, could we, as to some important particulars, so reasonably expect to have them urged. Whatever the Jews, of whose number was Jesus, have to say against his authority, that we are concerned inquisitively to listen to, and carefully to weigh.

LECTURE X.

GROUNDS OF JEWISH UNBELIEF.

The last Lecture was chiefly occupied with an account of the views and feelings, which influenced the body of the Jewish people to reject our religion when offered to them by the personal ministry of Jesus and his apostles. The earliest of their authors, in whose writings we search for intimations of his own or his nation's opinion on this great subject, is the Jewish historian, Josephus. Josephus was born about ten years after our Lord's crucifixion, and lived till near the close of the first century. He was a priest, by virtue of his descent from a sacerdotal family; and to his accomplishments as a scholar and writer he added those of military skill, which he signalized in his defence of a small town in Judea against the legions of Vespasian and Titus. When the conquest of his country was completed, he retired to Rome, where he lived in honor, and composed,

in the Greek language, his "Jewish Antiquities," and "Wars of the Jews," besides some smaller works.

Though he writes as a Jewish patriot, a character which it would have been impossible to separate altogether from that of a Jewish religionist, I think there is good reason to believe his mind to have been infected with those skeptical tendencies of the Gentile world, to which he was largely exposed by the employments and connexions of his own life, to say nothing of the effect which four centuries of free communication with the Greeks and Romans, from the time of the Macedonian conquest down, had produced on numbers of his people. But, however this may be, — and it is not material to the purposes of our argument, — we find Josephus to have treated Christianity just as, under the circumstances that have been explained, we might suppose that it would be treated by a person of his position, in his time. If, as a philosophical skeptic, he distrusted all religion, then he looked for no Messiah; and the fact of his careless reference to Vespasian, as the person in whom the predictions of the Messiah were fulfilled, looks very much like this; for nothing can be more certain, than that the ancient writings represented the future prince as to be of the Jewish faith and parentage. If he looked for the Messiah, then it was such a Messiah as the rest of his nation looked for; and there was nothing in Jesus, sufficiently corresponding to that

magnificent idea, to arrest his attention under any common circumstances. He was moving in the high circles of society, where Christianity did not come much in his way; and he did not go in search of Christianity. His pleasures were those of elegant life; his cares were those of the politician and the soldier. He lived in a very stormy time, and a variety of subjects pressed themselves on his attention. If he had heard of the wonderful works wrought by Jesus in the generation preceding his own, he would say to himself, either that the relation was fabulous, or else, in the spirit of the age, that the wonders had been accomplished by demoniacal or magical arts; and, if the calumnies circulated from the first against the persecuted sect had reached his ear, they would but increase his coldness and his prejudice.

In this state of ignorance and indifference,—similar, it is likely, to what would be the state of mind of a polite writer of the present day in relation to the Mormonites,—it is no matter of surprise, if we find in his writings no reference whatever to Christianity. Whether, in fact, we find any or not, is doubtful; the question depending on the opinion which may be entertained of the authenticity of two passages, which, though found in all the now extant manuscripts of his works, are believed by many learned men to have been not originally his, but the interpolations of some later hand. In the first is only a passing notice of the stoning, by order of Ananus, of

James, described as "the brother of Jesus, who is called Christ."* The words of the other, and more important, which occurs in the eighteenth book of the "Jewish Antiquities," are as follows;

"At that time, lived Jesus, a wise man, if it is proper to call him a man. For he performed wonderful works, and was a teacher of men who received the truth with pleasure. And he attached to himself many Jews and Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, instigated by our first men, had condemned him to the cross, they who had first loved did not desert him. For he appeared to them again alive on the third day, the divine prophets having spoken these and numerous other wonderful things of him. Up to the present time, the sect of Christians, named from him, has not disappeared."†

These words, it was remarked, are found, at this day, in every ancient manuscript. Against their genuineness it is urged chiefly, that no reference is made to them by the most ancient Christian writers who succeeded Josephus; and that Josephus, if he had written them, must have been a believer in Jesus, which there is no reason to suppose that he was, but a great deal of reason to the contrary.

The first objection must be allowed to have considerable force; though much weakened, I think, by what I have to say upon the second. I cannot go along either with those who argue, that Josephus,

* *Antiq. Jud.* Lib. xx. cap. 8. § 1. (p. 896, edit. Oxon.)
† Ibid. Lib. xviii. cap. 4. § 3, (p. 798.)

having used these words, must be understood to have been a believer in Christ, though a disguised one (the disguise, indeed, must have been thrown off, when he used them in the sense supposed), nor with those who say, that, since he was no Christian, the words cannot be his. The words are, I think, very naturally understood as importing, not what Josephus believed concerning Jesus, but what he had been told was asserted by Jesus's disciples. He recites their testimony in the form in which he understood them to give it; a way to avoid circumlocution, universally allowed and common. "Jesus was the Christ, and performed many wonderful works," said the unbelieving Josephus, using a similar form of language to what we should use in reciting some ancient pagan fable. This interpretation appears to me to be actually confirmed by a passage of Jerome, where, professing to quote these words of Josephus, he represents the historian as speaking of Jesus, as the person "believed to be the Christ."*

And, if this view of the second objection to the genuineness of the words be adopted as correct, the first falls to the ground along with it. If Josephus wrote these words, and his meaning in them was, that Jesus *was understood* by many to be the Christ, then it follows that this was also the construction put upon them by the Christian writers near to his time; and, if this were so, then they would no

* Hieron. *Catal. Script. Ecclesiast.* Opp. Tom. I. p. 272. (ed. Erasm. Basil. 1565.)

more think of referring to his words in corroboration of their own assertions, than we should think of appealing to a Classical Dictionary to show that its author really attributed to the personages of the heathen mythology the actions recorded by him under their names. At all events, whether the passage be genuine or not, the position of Josephus in relation to Christianity will demand to be viewed in the same light. If he has spoken of Jesus at all, it is in a way which betrays his vagueness of information, and want of interest. If he has not spoken of him, his silence was owing to the same cause. The question respecting the claims of Jesus had never been seriously entertained by him, and he had not preparation, more than inclination, for argument upon it.

From the second century, — that is, the century next following the age of Josephus,—has come down to us a document of great curiosity, relating to this subject; and it reveals to us how utterly unsatisfactory to a right mind were the delusions which actually robbed the Jewish mind of that age, of a Christian faith and hope. Justin, commonly called from the manner of his death the *Martyr*, was born of Gentile parents, in the middle district of Palestine, about the year 100 of our era. He early addicted himself to the study of philosophy, was successively a disciple of the Stoic, Peripatetic, Pythagorean, and Platonic schools, and, when about thirty years of age, becoming a convert to Christianity, found in that religion the truth

hitherto sought elsewhere in vain. He lived a faithful Christian professor, and perished, at an advanced age, a faithful Christian martyr. Besides some writings, whose authenticity is doubted, there are extant three principal works of his, in the Greek language; namely, his first and second *Apologies*, so called, — that is, Defences of Christianity (or rather, in point of fact, of its professors), — and his *Dialogue with Trypho* the Jew, in two parts.

It is with this Dialogue that we are now concerned. It is probably not to be strictly taken as a record of a conference actually held with a Jew; but rather as a composition, in a form much esteemed in that age, resembling for instance the dialogues of Plato and of Cicero, with whose writings, at least with those of the former, Justin was well acquainted. But whether the record of a real conference or conferences or not, if we believe Justin to have written to any purpose (and undoubtedly he was a very sincere and earnest man), it is unavoidable to regard him as having embodied in his work those views, which were understood by him to have weight with reflecting Jews of his day in connexion with their hostility to Christianity.

The composition, which, in the best edition, occupies three hundred folio pages, is a very rambling one, and I cannot inflict upon my audience the tediousness of a minute analysis of its contents. No one, who will take the pains to read it, will continue to feel much surprise that Jews of

repute in that age withheld their belief from Christianity, when he sees with what mere trifles and puerilities their minds were besotted in relation to the subject. Nor is there any ground for supposing that Justin disingenuously misrepresented their argument in order to make it seem weaker than it was; for it is evident that he lays himself out very strenuously to reply to it, lavishing on it great store of logic and learning; and often, it must be owned, his answers to Trypho's inane objections are no better than the objections themselves. Indeed, this Dialogue of Justin, who, from the circumstances of his early life, could not be supposed to be a very judicious interpreter of the Jewish Old Testament, has been an ample storehouse of fanciful expositions of that collection of writings, to later critics in ancient and modern times; a point which I am tempted to illustrate at large. But I forbear. I shall keep closer to our proper argument by giving a specimen of the objections to Christianity, which availed with Jews of good standing in the second century, as these are expressed in the character of Trypho. And I will mention them in the order of the treatise.

The parties having met, and the preliminaries of the interview having been gone through, some general discourse takes place, embracing remarks on the character and worth of philosophy and science, and the obscurity which they had left resting on some of the greatest subjects.* Then, from a

* *Dialog*, etc. pp. 136—151.

mention of the ancient Jewish books, respecting whose authority he and Trypho were agreed,— an authority, he takes care to intimate, resting on the evidence of miracles,—Justin passes to an expression of his faith in that Christ, of whom, he says, those writings spoke; to all which Trypho replies by giving his advice to his friend (as he says he considers him) to become a Jew, and observe the whole Jewish ritual. "Then," says he, "perhaps God will have pity upon you. For as to the Christ, even if he were born, he is unknown as such, and does not even know himself in that character, nor is possessed of any authority, till Elias has come and anointed him. . . . . You have but listened to an idle rumor, and so are led to feign to yourself a Christ, and for his sake to forfeit all the comforts of the present life." "You, on the contrary," says Justin, "know not whereof you affirm, but follow masters who do not understand the Scriptures, ... as I will prove to you if you will give me audience." *

The conference being agreed upon, Justin begins it with language which is curious and important, as it shows under what a weight of obloquy, repelling the attention and blinding the judgment of inquirers, he understood the Christian cause already to labor at this very early time. "Let me ask," he says, "whether what you find fault with us Christians for is, that we do not keep the legal

* Ibid. pp. 153, 154.

ritual, or that our lives and morals are obnoxious to reproach. What I mean is, are you of those who suppose that we feast on human flesh, and that, after our repast, we extinguish the lights, and indulge in promiscuous intercourse"? *

"This," replies Trypho, "is what surprises me; those common reports I own to be undeserving of credit, for such crimes are out of nature. The precepts which I read in your Gospel, so called, are so weighty and admirable, as to create a doubt whether they are capable of being observed; for I have myself been at pains to read them"; a very interesting testimony, it may be remarked, by the way, in whatever light it be viewed, to the existence and circulation, at that early time, of our Gospel records. "What I exceedingly wonder at, is," he continues, "that you, professing to be religious, and to be better than other men, yet distinguish yourselves in nothing from the Gentiles in your way of life, neither observing the feast days, nor the Sabbath, nor circumcision; but, placing your reliance on a crucified man, you hope to receive some benefit from God, while you thus forbear to keep his commandments. Have you not read, that whoever is not circumcised on the third day, that soul shall be cut off from his people? . . . . . But you, contemning this covenant, and paying no regard to the other ordinances, yet endeavour to persuade us to your party as if you were acquainted

* Ibid. p. 155.

with God. If it is not so, if you can defend yourself against this charge, and show on what ground you expect any thing while you neglect the Law, I am willing to listen to you, and then to pursue the investigation into other particulars." *

This last language is deserving of especial observation. "If you can show on what ground you expect any thing *while you neglect the Law*, I am willing to listen to you, and then,"—what then? the reader asks,—"and then to pursue the investigation into other particulars." That is, an unfounded, but most efficient, prepossession required to be overcome, before the evidence for Christianity, properly so called, would be so much as looked at. The Jew has chosen his ground, as he had a right to do, since it was he that was to be convinced. And what was that ground? Not that there never was such a person as Jesus; not that trustworthy accounts of his actions and discourses were wanting; not that the story of his life told by his disciples was to be considered as a fable. To maintain these assertions, as it would seem not difficult to do, supposing their truth, at the end of a century's time from the date of the occurrences falsely pretended, would have been the way to end the strife. To urge them, if it could be done with any speciousness, would be to touch the point of the argument. At least, to suggest such a denial, if it could be done with any show of probability,

* Ibid. pp. 155, 156.

would seem the natural resource of unbelief. But there is nothing whatever of all this. The Jew looked no further than to see that the belief of Christians, as it had been reported to him, was not to be reconciled with views, which, as a Jew, he held to be indisputably certain. There he stopped. And this I take to be a just representation of the state of the Jewish mind, in its aversion to Christianity, in the second century, as well as, to a great extent, in the first. I do not forget, that this Dialogue was very probably never spoken, and that the character of Trypho himself may be fictitious. But to say this, I repeat, is not to speak to the purpose. Trypho was, at all events, a representative of the Jewish way of thinking. What is very plain is, that Justin wrote with a view to impress and satisfy Jews; and that, of consequence, he selected those topics of argument, upon which he understood Jewish minds especially to labor.

Justin takes up the discourse at the point which had been proposed to him, by saying that Christians acknowledged and adored the same eternal and almighty God as the Jews, the same God who had brought the ancient people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; but that this same God had promised, even under the old dispensation, that he would in due time reveal another law, and that for the instruction of the whole human race;* and this naturally leads him

* Ibid. p. 157.

to make copious references to the Old Testament. I shall not follow him in his quotations or comments, which would not illustrate the point now before us, but shall rather lay before you, partly in an abridged form, the interlocutions of Trypho, which for the most part are brief, though occasionally they run into some detail.

Justin having, with scarcely an interruption, urged his views respecting the relation of the ancient to a future law, and illustrated them by large citations, to an extent which now occupies more than forty printed pages, Trypho contents himself with the concise reply; "These scriptures which you cite, and others like them, compel us to look for a great and glorious person, who, as the Son of Man, receives from the Ancient of Days an everlasting kingdom; but this Christ, so called, of yours, was so utterly without regard or honor, that he fell under the last curse of God's law, for he was crucified." *

To this when Justin had replied by arguing, that there were two sets of predictions concerning the Messiah, the one to be fulfilled in Jesus in his humiliation, the other in his state of glory, and by other considerations, Trypho, after seizing on a reference by Justin to Solomon's idolatries,† to throw out a suggestion which shows his prejudiced state of mind (namely, that he heard that some Christians permitted themselves to eat of meats offered

* Ibid. p. 200. † Ibid. p. 206.

to idols),* proposes to Justin, on the supposition of the truth of his declaration that prophecy does speak of a first afflicted and then triumphant, spiritual sovereign, that he shall show that these predictions were fulfilled in Jesus ; † which Justin has not proceeded far in attempting to do, before Trypho breaks in with exclamations of horror. "It would have been better," he says, "for us to have obeyed our teachers, who have forbidden us to hold communication with any of your tribe [another important intimation of the pains taken with the body of the Jews by their superiors, to preserve their allegiance by keeping them from converse with Christians]; for you utter blasphemy on blasphemy, pretending to persuade us that this crucified man was with Moses and Aaron, and spoke to them in the fiery pillar, and afterwards was a man and was crucified, and then ascended to heaven, and will again appear on earth, and be adored." ‡ "You are beside yourself," he continues in a quieter strain, "to assert such things, I would have you know it ; " § and then repeats his request, that Justin will show how the crucified Jesus is to be understood as described in the old prophecies of Scripture, which Justin accordingly proceeds to do at large, with the introduction, however, of much irrelevant matter, and with expositions, as has been said, by no means in every case judicious.

* Ibid. p. 207.
† Ibid. p. 210.
‡ Ibid. p. 213.
§ Ibid. p. 216.

The discourse proceeds to the end of the first part, interrupted from time to time by Trypho with occasional questions and remarks. "Tell me," he asks, "as to those who have governed themselves by Moses's Law; will they live at the resurrection of the dead, like Jacob, Enoch, and Noah, or not?"* and follows up the inquiry with others, having no more direct bearing on the main question at issue, but interesting as they show the complete absorption of the speaker's mind in narrow Jewish theories, excluding any but a Jewish standard of thought and judgment. Particularly is he anxious to know whether in Jerome's opinion Gentile Christians, if they choose also to keep the Jewish law, may be saved, which Justin admits that they may be.†

A little further on occurs a passage of peculiar interest, both as bringing to view another occasion of the extreme repugnance of the Jews to Christianity from the second century down, and as evincing a difference of opinion, then existing and tolerated in the Christian community, on a still controverted point. "As to your saying," says Trypho, "that this Christ was a God before the ages [an opinion of Justin, which those who now, like him, entertain it, will approve him for upholding, while others will understand him not to have learned it from Christianity, but to have brought it with him from the Platonic schools, which taught

* Ibid. p. 226. † Ibid. pp. 228, 229.

a divine, eternal *Word*], and then consented to be born and become a man, this appears to me not only amazing, but also foolish." To which Justin replies; "I know that this appears marvellous, especially to the men of your nation, who never have been willing to understand and do God's truth, but only the will of your teachers. But, Trypho, observe, I pray, that my declaration of Jesus being the Christ of God will not fall to the ground, even though I should fail to demonstrate that he pre-existed as the son of the Creator of the universe, and that he is a God himself, and became a man by birth of the virgin. But, since it has been shown that he is the Christ of God, whatever else may be his character, even though I should not prove that he had a previous life, and then was born a man like ourselves with a body, and so endured the Father's will, it would be proper for you to say only that in this I am mistaken, but not to deny that he is the Christ, even though he should appear a man born like others, and only constituted the Christ by divine selection. For there are some of our own people, who hold that he is the Christ, but that still he was a man born like others; with whose view I do not myself accord, nor would many others admit this who are of the same opinion with me. ....." In answer to which, Trypho urges that prepossession which has had such effectual force with Jews in all the later ages. "Those disciples who say that he was a man, and by divine appointment was anointed and became Christ, ap-

pear to me to present a view more probable than yours. For all we Jews expect the Christ to be born like other men, and we look for Elias to come and anoint him. So that if Jesus is to be shown to be the Christ, it is by all means necessary for us to understand that he is a man by human descent." *

"But again," he says, "I do not think that he is the Christ, because Elias has not yet appeared." Justin gives a double reply, that Elias will be the precursor of his second coming, and that John the Baptist, endued with the spirit of Elias, was the herald of his first.† After some words of criticism upon the language of the Old Testament, illustrative of this topic, he is recalled by Trypho to the higher subject of recent question. "Tell me," he asks, "how you can prove that there is another God besides the Creator of the universe, and then you shall show me further that he condescended to be born of the virgin." ‡ Instead of attempting this, however, Justin proceeds to enlarge on the office of John, and the two comings of Christ, till Trypho again breaks in with the proposal; "I will remember what you have just been saying; but what I now desire is that you will show, that another god besides the Creator of the universe has ever been acknowledged by the prophetic spirit."§ Justin then treats this question at length, adducing to the point various passages of the Old

* Ibid. pp. 233 — 236. † Ibid. pp. 236, 237. ‡ Ibid. p. 238.
§ Ibid. p. 247.

Testament (such, for instance, as the appearance of the three men at Abram's tent by the oak of Mamre), upon the correctness of his interpretation of which Trypho and one of the bystanders, from time to time, comment, and it is not for us, in this argument, to decide. The connected doctrine, that this exalted being condescended to be born of a virgin, is then largely urged by Justin in the same manner, by arguments drawn from the language of Isaiah to Ahaz (which Trypho says should be applied rather to Hezekiah), and from various other Old Testament passages less appropriate. But Trypho still insists on the doctrine of the passage, "I am the Lord God, that is my name, and my glory and my excellency I will not give to another;"* he pronounces it "an incredible and well-nigh impossible thing, that a god should submit to be born and become a man;"† and the most that can be obtained from him in the way of concession is, "Let Jesus be the recognised Lord and Christ, and God of you Gentiles; . . . . . but as for us Jews, who are servants of the God who made him what he is, we have no need to profess or honor him."‡

I have given an abstract of the first part of the Dialogue of Justin with Trypho. In the second, which dilates upon topics substantially the same, the interlocutions of Trypho are very few, and add nothing to the view already presented of his state

* Ibid. p. 277. † Ibid. p. 283. ‡ Ibid. p. 273.

of mind in respect to Christianity, as indicating that of the more intelligent portion of his people at that period. The question of the meaning of Isaiah's prediction of the birth of a virgin's child is again largely treated, with illustrations and inferences which provoke from Trypho another charge of blasphemy, manifesting the temper with which he approached the subject. Further, the point is pressed, "What we revolt from is, your statement that the Christ perished so ignominiously on a cross; for in the Law it is written that the crucified is accursed, so that, as to that, I am utterly incredulous;" * and again, "Establish this for us from the Scriptures [from the Old Testament Scriptures, of course, is his meaning], that so we may believe you;" † and the rest of the treatise, to the extent of a hundred pages, is occupied with Justin's excursive and often fanciful reasonings in reply. The parties separate in friendship and with mutual compliments, but no conviction is produced.

Here, then, we have, in the most unexceptionable form of authenticity, the state of the controversy with such Jewish unbelievers as would attend at all to the question at issue, in the second century; which must of course be also held substantially to represent the state of that controversy both earlier and later. The Jew selects the points of discussion, as it was proper that he should, since

* Ibid. p. 334. † Ibid. p. 335.

it was he that was to be convinced. If we choose to make the statement with more verbal precision, adapting it to the opinion of its not being an actual conference that is described, the essential case remains the same. The Jew states his own points of objection, or they are stated for him by Justin, who knew what the current objections relied upon by Jews were, and who, writing, as he undeniably did, for the conviction of Jews, would take care to bring them to view, else his work would be worthless for its purpose. And what are they?

They are such as do not touch the prominent grounds of a Christian's belief at the present day. There is no denial of the existence of an authentic record of the deeds and discourses of Jesus; on the contrary, Trypho says that he had consulted it. There is no denial of the truth of that record; no denial that he did the mighty works, and spoke the gracious words, which it reported. There is no pretence of argument to prove that Jesus and his associates were conspirators in a fraud, as there would unavoidably have been, had the Jews of that age pretended to join direct issue on that question. And yet, if the Jews of that age, at only a century's distance from the time of the alleged events, had, with all their antipathy to the religion, no developments to make in support of a charge of fraud, nor dreamed of putting that material, all-comprehensive charge in the van of their argument, what is the necessary inference from such

a significant silence? What is it, but that it was well known that no such plea could be sustained, or, at least, that no confidence was felt that it could be? The Jew had nothing to say against Christianity in the way of discrediting the wonderful works of Jesus, either because he had heard of them on what seemed good authority, or because they had not attracted his attention. To his ill-reasoning mind, there were other considerations, which arrested him on the threshold, and detained him in unbelief.

I do not say that questions of the interpretation of the Old Testament, involving its relation to the New, are unimportant. They are far otherwise. But such questions do not touch the positive, direct evidence for the divine mission of Jesus; and yet it was with such that the Jewish mind was prepossessed, and by its apprehensions of them that it was beguiled. In the work of which I have given an analysis, its author treats no other; and this must have been because he knew, that, with such opponents, it was on these that the controversy rested. If, for the fact of his not having urged, in this treatise, the miraculous evidence of his faith, any further reason admitted of being given than that this was not the topic of argument which his opponent proposed, he has incidentally supplied it, in allusions to the prevalence and force of an error referred to in my last Lecture. He speaks in one place of its having been objected to that kind of evidence by some, that Jesus wrought the mira-

cles attributed to him by magical art.* And in another place he says, "He cured such as from their birth had been lame, and blind, and deaf. One he made by a word to leap, another to hear, another to see. He raised the dead, and made them live; and by such works he called on the men of his time to acknowledge him. But, when they saw these things done, they pretended that it was all but magic, and ventured to call him a conjurer, and a seducer of the people."†

I pass to a curious Jewish compilation, of the period between the second and fifth centuries, which will further illustrate the view that has been presented of the state of sentiment and feeling among the Jews of those times, in relation to the new faith. From the New Testament, as well as from other sources, we learn the attachment of that people to traditional glosses upon their Law, with other related matter bequeathed to them from the fathers. These having accumulated to a great amount, but passing as yet from generation to generation by oral transmission only, about the middle of the second century, that is, in the life-time of Justin, a collection of them was made at Tiberias, in Galilee, by an eminent Rabbi, named Judah Hakkadosh, or Judah *the Holy*, into a book, which, regarded with great veneration by the Jews, has descended to the present time, under the title of the "Mishna," or *Second Law*. To this, about

* Ibid. p. 48. † Ibid. p. 288.

the year 300, was annexed, by the doctors of the Jerusalem school, a quantity of similar matter under the name of the "Gemara," or *Supplement;* a like addition, two hundred years later, under the same name, was made at the school of Babylon; and according as the "Mishna" is furnished with the "Gemara" of Jerusalem, or with that of Babylon, the two-fold compilation goes by the name of *the Jerusalem*, or of *the Babylonish* "Talmud," a Rabbinical word, signifying *instruction.*

The ingenuity of learning has attempted to point out in the "Mishna" some remote allusions to Christianity and its disciples; but I think no clear case of even such vague reference is established. In the "Gemaras" it is so far different, that there are a few references to the religion and to its author (whom they state to have been put to death as a seducer of the people, on the eve of a Passover), but nothing whatever, in the way of argument; nothing beyond mere passionate, inconclusive, and worthless expressions of the bitter hostility with which both were regarded, and appeals to the ignorant popular indignation against them. There are two or three insinuations, at that distance of centuries from the time, — insinuations, such as cost nothing to utter, and which there is no pretence of endeavour to maintain, — against the character of the mother of Jesus. But the nearest approach to an argument is, where an attempt is made to account for the power with which Jesus wrought. "The tradition is," says

the Gemara, "that, on the day of the preparation of the Passover, they hanged Jesus, and that a crier went before him forty days, making proclamation in these words; 'He was led forth to be stoned, because he *practised magical arts*, and seduced, and led away the Israelites;'"* a mistake, I may remark, by the by, concerning even the public circumstances of his death, which shows how uninstructed the writer was concerning them.

Again; "Did he not bring enchantments out of Egypt in the incision which was in his flesh?" Of this proceeding an explanation is also given worthy of the problem; namely, that the reason of his bringing away the enchantments by such means was, that he could not bring them away in writing, because the priests diligently searched all at their departure, to prevent their carrying away magical arts, to teach to the inhabitants of other countries.† I need not say that this implied admission of the fact of supernatural operation is worth infinitely more on one side than such solutions of it on the other. And that admission is also distinctly made in another form, in relation to powers exercised by disciples of Jesus; "A child," it is said in the Jerusalem Gemara, "of a son of Rabbi Joses, son of Levi, swallowed something poisonous. There came a man who ad-

* *Babylonish Talmud*, Lib. *Sanhedrin*, as quoted by Wagenseil, *Confut. Tol. Jeshu*, p. 19, and by Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebraïcæ*, on Mat. xxvii. 31.

† Ibid. Lib. *Schabbath*, as quoted by Wagenseil, ubi supra, p. 17, and by Lightfoot, ubi supra, on Mat. ii. 14.

dressed an adjuration to him in the name of Jesus, and he was cured. When he was gone away, the Rabbi inquired, 'How did you adjure him?' He replied, 'With such a word.' 'Better were it,' said he, 'to have died, than to have heard it.'" *

The truth is, as has been said, that, after the first period of the publication of our religion, owing to the greater encouragement which its preachers found in addressing Gentiles, the superior influence which Gentile converts obtained in the church, the dispersed condition of the Jewish people, and its rooted and ever-growing aversion to the pretensions of the new sect and to communication with its Gentile adherents, the intercourse between Jews and Christians was much abridged; and the leaders of the former people availed themselves of this separation to confirm and embitter the prejudices and passions of those to whom they gave law. The Christians, it was said, were atheists; they were idolaters; they were blasphemers; they were profligates; they were addicted to diabolical arts; no devout Jew could think of any association with them. In process of time, to what had been falsely said to their prejudice, and so to the prejudice of their faith, was added what, alas! might be truly said. The Christians became persecutors. Their religion, or what called itself by the name, carried on this self-ruinous contest with unbelief through many

* *Jerusalem Talmud*, Lib. *Schabbath*, as quoted by Martini, *Pugio Fidei advers. Maur. et Jud.* Part. II. cap. 8. (p. 290.)

a weary age. The Jew might be pardoned if he had no predilections for a faith, which was always pursuing him with robbery and insult, and threatening him with murder. He had felt its cruelty; the more readily could he acquiesce in what his childhood had been taught of its impiety and falsehood.

The disbelief of the Jews accordingly has been substantially disbelief anterior to, and independent of, consideration of the evidence of what they rejected; though it is true, that, in the most modern times, there have been some of their number, who, characterized by a speculative turn of mind, which has broken them off from their hereditary alliances, have adopted such grounds of dissent as connect them not with the Jewish, but with the deistical, or atheistical controversy; as Acosta, Spinoza, and others. Jewish arguments, properly so called, have continued through the intervening times, the same that they were at the beginning. When their writers have begun to reason, they have but presented, all along, so many repetitions of Trypho, the Jew of the second century.

There is a collection of tracts popular among them, of different dates, made by Wagenseil, a German divine of the seventeenth century, and published by him in the original Rabbinical, with a Latin version, and laborious strictures. It is entitled "Tela Ignea Satanæ," the *Fiery Darts of Satan*, and is regarded as a kind of library of Jewish polemics. The first of these tracts is the

"Triumphal Chant" of one Rabbi Lipman, who is said to have lived in the fourteenth century. It is short, consisting of only eleven pages; though the German editor, a feeble pedant, has appended to it a Latin commentary consisting of more than five hundred closely printed pages in quarto. The substance of it is, the Jewish interpretation of a few Old Testament texts to which Christians were in the habit of appealing; but neither in matter nor form does it rank among controversial treatises.

The second tract in the collection, called the "Old Triumph" (for the original word, signifying *triumph*, *conquest*, however assuming it may sound, was the title commonly given by the Jews to their writings in this department), is of earlier date, being referred to the twelfth century. It is made up, first, of a series of more or less successful confutations of certain applications of Old Testament texts, made by Christians to Jesus and his religion, and, secondly, of objections and cavils against certain doctrines of the Gospel as held by its disciples, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity, and against certain statements of the evangelical history. Of these last I give a specimen or two, which may serve to convey a just idea of the style of reasoning, not only in this book, but in others of its class. To multiply such would be only wasting time. "The Gospel declares," it is said, "that Jesus slept; but if he were God, as Christians maintain, how could this be? for is it not written in the Psalms, 'Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither

slumber nor sleep?'"* Again; "Jesus is related to have said, 'I confess to thee, O Father, lord of heaven and earth;' but if he were God, what need had he to confess?"† Again; "The circumstances of his birth are related to have been miraculous. But, if this were intended to be, why was not a mother chosen, who was of merely infantile age?"‡ Once more; "It is recorded that Jesus, having cured a lame man, bade him take up his bed and walk; and it is argued that he might lawfully perform a work of mercy on the Sabbath day. That is true; he might cure the cripple, but he should not have told him to take up his bed and walk."§ The most interesting passage in the treatise is one, which contains a passing notice of the miracles of Jesus, and refers them as usual to the power of charms learned in Egypt. ‖

The third work in this collection consists of two parts, containing the record of two public discussions, held in the thirteenth century, the one at Paris, the other at Tarragona in Spain; the first, between one Rabbi Jehiel, and Nicolaus, a Christian proselyte from Judaism; the second between Rabbi Moses Ben Nachman, and two friars of the Order of Preachers. The first does not consist, on the Jewish champion's part, of a defence of his own religion, or an assault on that of Christians, but rather of a vindication of his people from the

* *Nizzahon Vetus*, p. 210. † Ibid. p. 207. ‡ Ibid. p. 137.
§ Ibid. p. 207. ‖ Ibid. p. 341.

charge of having traduced Christianity and its author in their books; a vindication disingenuously conducted, no doubt (for nothing can be plainer than that the passages whose sense he endeavours to explain away as applying to some other subject, did refer to Jesus and his religion),* but a disingenuousness which moves pity much more than blame, when one remembers the perils with which the disputant was surrounded. The second discussion embraces a different class of topics, containing extended expositions of passages of the Old Testament and of the Talmuds, with animadversions on the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.

The next treatise in the collection, entitled "Hissuk Emuna," the *Bulwark of the Faith*, a work partly by one Rabbi Isaac, a Moorish Jew of the fifteenth century, and partly by a disciple of his, who continued what he left incomplete, has more of the proper character of a general argument in this controversy, than either of the others; but it is as far as any of the rest from taking the proper ground of dissent, namely, that of investigation of the historical evidence. Like the rest, it contains diffuse expositions of Old Testament Scripture, opposed to those of Christians, and presents the obnoxious doctrine of the Trinity in the front of the argument; it comments at large on the unworthy conduct of Christians, and discourses in detail on various passages of the New Testament,

* *Disputatio*, etc, pp. 16, 17.

with a view to point out discrepancies and other defects. This work, like the rest, when it refers to the miracles of Jesus, does not deny their reality, but ascribes them to the arts of magic.*

The last tract in this collection, entitled the "Toledoth Jeshu," *History of Jesus*, is a sort of wild romance, important, however, quite as much, or more than a work in a soberer vein, as showing by what discipline it was that the youthful Jewish mind was indoctrinated from age to age. It was known to Christians in a Latin translation as early as the thirteenth century, but Wagenseil was the first to obtain and publish it in the original Rabbinical. I am tempted to present an abstract of it, and should do so, did the time of my audience permit. After giving its own account of the circumstances of the birth of Jesus, it goes on to explain the source of his miraculous power. "There was at that period," it declares, "an inscription of the ineffable name of God on the foundation stone of the temple. David, when he dug for the foundation, discovered a stone, inscribed with that name, which he caused to be raised, and placed in the Holy of Holies. But the wise men, fearing that studious youth might learn the name, and with it bring ruin upon the world, formed with their incantations two brazen lions, which they stationed before the door of the Holy of Holies, the one on the right hand, the other on the left. So if any one

* *Hissuk Emuna*, p. 452.

entered and learned the secret name, as he went out, the lions roared after him, and caused him, through his great consternation, to forget the name. Jesus, however, came from upper Galilee, and entered the temple, and wrote the unspeakable name on parchment, and made an incision in his flesh, and there concealed it, and, by uttering the name, caused the wound to close over. . . . . The howling of the beasts, as he left the temple, caused him to forget the name; but he had secured it in writing, and so, going out of the city, he opened his flesh, and possessed himself of the name," with which he restored a leper to cleanness, and a dead man to life, clothing his dry skeleton with muscle, nerves, and skin.* The history goes on to relate how Jesus by the same means wrought other miracles; how Judas stole the name from him by night, having enchanted for that purpose the angel of sleep;† and how a contest between them followed, in the sequel of which Jesus was betrayed, and put to death.‡ But I cannot pursue it. Suffice it to say, that, in that Jewish treatise, in which, of all known to Christians, the miracles of Jesus are most fully treated, they are not denied as facts, but ascribed to his having stolen the ineffable name of God from the custody of brazen lions in the temple.

As we descend to recent times, in which Jews have had freer communication with the rest of the world, and the well-informed of their number have

* *Toledoth Jeshu*, pp. 6—8. † Ibid. p. 14. ‡ Ibid. pp. 17, 18.

had opportunity to become acquainted with the literature of Christian nations, we feel less curiosity respecting their writings adverse to our religion, because any historical objection, abstractly plausible, which was not found in any of their earlier books, would lose its plausibility as only appearing in the later, and because we might expect, as has been the fact, that any peculiarly Jewish topics of dissent would give place to, or become mingled with, those advanced by other classes of unbelievers. I will therefore only detain you with a few words upon the course of two modern controversies.

The first of these took place about a hundred and fifty years ago, and consisted of a correspondence, comprising three communications on each side, in the Latin language, between Philip Limborch, a divine of Amsterdam, and Balthazar Orobio, a Jewish physician, which correspondence was printed by Limborch, in a quarto volume, under the title of "Amica Collatio cum Erudito Judæo," *A Friendly Conference with a Learned Jew.*

Orobio was a native of Spain, where his parents, though of Jewish extraction, and never in reality converts from the national faith, had, like many others of the period, publicly professed the Catholic religion, and educated their son in outward conformity to its creed and usages. He did not carry his dissimulation so far as did many of his compatriots of the time, having never taken holy orders in the Church; but, having distinguished

himself for talents and learning, he was raised to a professor's chair in the University of Salamanca. He fell into suspicion with the Inquisition, and was put to the torture; but, having the firmness constantly to deny that he was a Jew, was released after three years confinement, and retired first to Toulouse, and then to Amsterdam, where he openly avowed his return to the faith of his fathers, and where he lived till his death in 1687, eminent for his success in the practice of the healing art. In point of dignified, calm, candid, and truly Christian tone, I know of no controversy which will compare favorably with this of Limborch and Orobio; and, in respect to command of pure Latinity, and perhaps to general scholarship, the Jew does not suffer in the comparison with his distinguished Christian opponent.

But the work adds nothing material to the force of the Jewish argument, as it has been exhibited in all times. Still, for the most part, the controversy is identified with questions of Jewish scriptural interpretation. Objections are urged to the principles of exposition adopted by Christians, and to various instances of the application of those principles; and charges are brought against current opinions, practices, and formal doctrines of Christians, as opposed to reason, to one another, and to the Law of Moses. These constitute the substance of the book. Orobio bears his testimony to the sanctity of the pure evangelical doctrine, alleging

that it is mostly of Old Testament origin. * His antagonist is at great pains to fix his attention upon the direct external evidence of the miraculous works of Jesus and his disciples. But of these he says, in the first place, that, as to the fact of the miracles, he will not dispute it, because considerations independent of them are decisive with him; † and then goes on, in two chapters, to express briefly concerning them, and concerning the authenticity of the books which record them, the usual infidel doubts, without any interesting specification, or any peculiarity of statement, such as would connect this part of his treatise with the Jewish argument. ‡

The remaining controversy, to which I referred, is that between Dr. Priestley, in his "Letters to the Jews," and Rabbi David Levi, author of "Dissertations on the Prophecies," an account of "The Ceremonies of the Jews," "A Translation of the Pentateuch," and other works. It is not elaborate on either part, nor such as to present our main subject in any new aspect. The Jewish doctor lays down the proposition, that "the fairest method, and that which is the likeliest to lead to conviction on either side [with respect to the Messiahship of Jesus], is to take a review of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah, from Moses to Malachi, and compare them with the acts of Jesus recorded in the New Testament, to see whether they have been

* *Amica Collatio*, etc. p. 135. † Ibid. p. 131.
‡ Ibid. pp. 131, 144, *et seq.*

fulfilled in his person, or not;"* and he proceeds to argue, after the custom of his nation, that they have not been so fulfilled. He objects to the history of the miraculous conception; he insists that Christians ought to be unanimous in their own opinions, before they undertake to convert Jews; and concerning the miraculous working of Jesus he says, in the expression of a singular confusion of ideas, "Whether it was by art, deception, or supernatural power, it is not my business to inquire." †

I conclude this Lecture with the following strain of judicious remark, by Dr. Priestley, on the incredulity of the Jewish nation, as actually constituting a contribution to the mass of Christian evidences. "Even," says he, addressing the Jews, ‡ "the general unbelief of your nation, which is so much to be lamented in some respects, has had its use with regard to the credibility of the Gospel history. Had the great body of your nation, and especially the rulers of it, in the time of Christ, or that of his apostles, embraced Christianity, as it was a religion which sprung up among yourselves, it would have been said at this day, that it was a contrivance of those who had it in their power to impose upon the common people, and to make them believe whatever they pleased; and that your Scriptures, which bear testimony to Christ, had been altered to favor the

* *Letters to Dr. Priestley*, &c. p. 91. † Ibid, p. 22.
‡ *Letters to the Jews*, Part I. p. 47.

imposture. Whereas, the violent opposition which your nation in general, and the rulers of it, made to Christianity, and which has continued to the present day, will for ever put it out of the power of unbelievers to say, that it was a scheme which the founders of it carried on in concert with any human powers. The work was not of man, but of God. It was founded on truth, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it."

APPENDIX.

[The following Discourse, read by the author of the present work as the annual Dudleian Lecture, at the University of Cambridge in Massachusetts, in the year 1839, contains a concise statement of his views on the subject of Natural Religion; and it seemed not unsuitable to form an Appendix to the preceding discussion, which assumes the doctrines of Natural Religion for its basis. A few periods, at the beginning and close, relate merely to the occasion for which the Discourse was prepared.]

THEORY AND USES

OF

NATURAL RELIGION.

Μάταιοι μὲν γὰρ ..... ἄνθρωποι, ... οἱ ἐκ τῶν ὁρωμένων ἀγαθῶν οὐκ ἴσχυσαν εἰδέναι ΤΟΝ ΟΝΤΑ, οὔτε τοῖς ἔργοις προσχόντες ἐπέγνωσαν ΤΟΝ ΤΕΧΝΙΤΗΝ.

Σοφία Σαλωμών, π'. α'.

The object of the present lecture, as defined in the words of its founder, is, "The proving, explaining, and proper use and improvement of the principles of Natural Religion, as it is commonly called and understood by divines and learned men."

Natural Religion is a phrase more comprehensive than Natural Theology, which stands only for the science of the being and attributes of God, as ascertained by the light of nature. Natural Religion is the science of the being and attributes of God, of the relations which man sustains to him, and of the duty of man, as these are discovered, or discoverable, by the human understanding, exerted without supernatural aid.

I. Religion, in the first place, affirms, and atheism, as its name imports, denies, the existence of God; by which word we mean, a Being apart from, and controlling, the sensible universe, — the producer and the sovereign of all else which exists.

The *à priori* argument for the existence of God, I shall pass over in this discussion. It is now generally given up as indefensible; and the writers who maintain its validity, still allow it to be of that subtile character, which makes it unfit to work conviction on the minds of the mass of men.

The *à posteriori* argument proceeds upon the postulate, that every effect must have a cause. But how do we know that any thing is an effect? for we must not beg that question. We know it by remarking something in its structure or phenomena, which satisfies us that it is now a thing different from what it once was. If not now what it always was, it has undergone some change. Change is not produced by any inherent principle of change; though, if it were, the argument would be the same; for then that principle would itself be a cause, immediate or remote. Change is produced by some operative agency. The condition into which that agency has brought the thing in question, is the effect; and whatever it was that exerted that agency, is the cause.

We may have different sorts and degrees of proof, that a thing is an effect, a result, the accomplishment of a process, the product of a change. But by no kind of proof are we more completely satisfied of this, than when we discern curiously exact adaptation. And this proves to us not only the exertion of some agency, but the exertion of some intelligent agency, more or less remote; that is, it proves, that, whether the process was longer or shorter, there was intelligent agency at its beginning. Nothing is more incredible to us, than that separate things shall be found so exactly fitted to each other, that, thus adjusted in numerous minute particulars, they accomplish a purpose, which the absence of any one particular of the adjustment would defeat, and yet that no intelligent agency has wrought so to fit them. Complicated adaptation, wherever observed, declares to our minds, that it has been brought about on set purpose. To our unavoidable conviction, the chances are infinite against its having come to pass in any other way.

Complicated arrangement and adaptation imply to our minds design and contrivance; and, where there have been design and contrivance, there of course has been a designer and contriver. Show me a blank sheet of paper, and tell me that it has always been what it is now, and, if I know nothing of the art of paper-making, I may hesitate, it is true, to admit what you say, but I shall not know on what ground I stand, if I offer a contradiction. Show it to me, covered with a picture, in which I recognise a perfect resemblance of the form of my dwelling, or the features of my friend, — show it to me, in other words, so prepared as to represent those objects, and to call up their idea in my mind while I contemplate it, — or show it to me inscribed with letters, which I not only see arranged in straight lines, equal pages, and fair divisions, but in which I read an elaborate history or poem, — and tell me that it is so without any care having been used to make it so, and I shall need no metaphysics to reply, that you are attempting very bold practice upon my credulity. Place in my hand a ragged fragment of native iron, and inform me that it is an independent, uncaused existence, and I may not be prepared to gainsay the assertion. But look with me at a steam-engine; let us trace together the transmission of power from the piston, that falls and rises with the condensed and expanding fluid, along the perfectly constructed labyrinth of shafts, and joints, and cogs, till, in the orderly revolution of some wheels, it does a marvellous labor-saving and gain-getting office for man, and assure me that these pieces of iron have always had this shape and combination, and that they took to performing, or that, at all events, they perform this part without any cause making them so to do, — and you stagger my belief in nothing except your seriousness, or your sanity.

It is thus that men in all ages, philosophers and no philosophers, have reasoned up from the wonderful mechanism of the universe to its unseen Author. It is thus that philosophers, in our day, have reasoned with peculiar ability and richness of resource, finding their topics in the constitution and motions of the heavenly bodies, the structure of the

earth, vegetable organization and life, the anatomy and instincts of animals, the intellectual capacities of man, and a variety of similar sources. The actual accumulation of such facts for the purposes of this argument is already vast. Their possible accumulation is endless. And they are undoubtedly of the same class with others, which, when human agency is in question, forbid us for a moment to doubt that such agency has been employed.

But the production of them is the province, not of a lecture, but of a series of treatises; and I believe I shall speak most to the purpose, on the present occasion, if, instead of attempting a partial exhibition of them, I give attention rather to what I conceive to be the only argument capable of influencing a reasonable mind to doubt for a moment the validity of the conclusion which they are said to sustain. I premise, that the mere fact of our being unable to conceive of a Creator who never began to be, will not be mentioned by any intelligent atheist as an objection to the doctrine, inasmuch as any difficulty, which is here presented, attaches of course equally to his own scheme. Foreign as the mode of existence of an eternal Being is from our experience, it is still demonstrably certain, that some being has been eternal. For nothing can act before it exists; and so, if there ever was a past time when nothing existed, nothing could in any time have come into existence, nothing could exist now. On this point atheism and theism agree. The question is, What is that existence that never began? Is it God, or is it the sensible universe?

The objection to which I have referred may be stated as follows; You argue from the excellence of what you call the creation, that it must have had a creator. That creator, as your own hypothesis and the reason of the case declare, must have been more excellent than his work. If, then, from the capacities of the creation, you infer that it must needs have had a creator, *à fortiori* you must infer, from the superior capacities of the creator, that he must have had one also; and so on, in an infinite series. How, then, does your hypothesis

relieve the difficulty? Is it not as well, or better, to regard the universe as having existed from eternity, as to account for its existence by referring it to the power of a creator, whose own existence becomes then equally a problem to be solved?

I cannot think it a sufficient answer to this argument to say, that the sensible universe has not existed from eternity because we know that some parts of it have been created in time; we know, for instance, from geological phenomena, and the recent beginning of all histories, that the origin of the human race is to be dated only a few thousand years back. I cannot esteem this a sufficient answer; because it might be replied, that the universe, though itself eternal, may assume, at different periods, different forms; in other words, may, periodically or not, yield different productions; as my knowledge of the recent growth of fruit, now borne by a certain tree, would not assure me that the tree itself had not always existed.

Nor am I satisfied with the reply, that to say, that all things have existed from eternity, instead of saying, that one thing has so existed, — namely, God, — is to multiply the difficulty indefinitely, and adopt infinitely the harder faith. For from this the objector would take refuge in saying, that his theory is that of pantheism; — which, though often called one form of the atheistical doctrine, it would not cost many words to show, differs in nothing from other forms, except in calling itself by a preposterous name, which is just as applicable to those others as to itself. He would say, that the sensible universe is not many things, but one thing, comprehending in itself all known attributes and powers.

Nor am I willing to take the ground of the recent treatise of Lord Brougham, who says, that in this argument "we set out with assuming the separate existence of our own mind, *independently of matter*. Without that, we never could conclude, that superior intelligence existed or acted. The belief that mind exists, is essential to the whole argument by which we infer that the Deity exists." I am unwilling, I say, to take this ground, because, spiritualist as I am, and persuaded,

perhaps as much as any one, that the opposite doctrine is a great and hurtful error, I would not admit, without necessity, that the materialist must needs be without proof of the divine existence.

I reply, in the first place, to the argument which I have undertaken to consider, that one part of its statement furnishes us with a refutation of it. It is by no means evident, that, to our minds, a perfect existence requires a creator to explain it, more than an imperfect one. It is so far from being evident, that the contrary is undeniably true. It is impossible, that we should ascribe to any thing imperfect the idea of independent existence, of self-sufficiency; the very idea, which, as soon as we can ascribe it to any being, relieves us, of course, from the necessity of finding any cause for that being. It is the very imperfection of sensible things, which satisfies us beyond a question, that they are not self-sufficient, and compels us to seek elsewhere for that self-sufficiency, that independent, uncaused being, which, as has been seen, must demonstrably exist somewhere. If the human body were perfect, — perfect, I mean, as a mere bodily organization, — it would not die. Its decay and dissolution are consequent upon its imperfection; and, when we know that it does die, there can be no question with us as to its possessing independent existence. If a watch, or a machine for perpetual motion, were a perfect machine, it would dispense with a renewal of the impelling force, and yet never run down. But, without a renewal of that force, they do run down. Were it otherwise, we might say, that, as they are dependent on nothing external now, so they never were dependent on any thing external; in other words, that they have an uncaused existence. As it is, we can pretend no such thing, since it is plain, that they are dependent on some external force to keep them in action, or that by some external force they are liable to have their action stopped. We trace this fact everywhere, to the very limits of our knowledge; it keeps up with us in every direction to the vanishing points, where the objects of our research escape us. It is not more true of the short swing

of a pendulum, than of the longer one of a planet, that it receives impulse and law from what is external to it. It is equally true of the vehicle, and of the limbs, which convey me to any place, that they are brought thither by a power not originating in themselves.

I do not say, then, only that all the parts of nature decay. That is not a decisive consideration; for what is decay, and what is reproduction, it might often be difficult to determine. But, as far as we can follow them, we know that all the parts of sensible nature are dependent. Each is dependent upon some other. Many of them are undoubtedly dependent upon human volition. They have not, therefore, self-sufficiency. They have not that attribute, which is essential to a First Cause. Accordingly they do not solve our problem, nor give any aid towards solving it, except as they direct us away from themselves. Self-sufficiency, self-dependence, — independence, rather, — undoubtedly exist somewhere; else, as we have seen, nothing could ever have been. We find no trace whatever of it in the sensible universe. On the contrary, as far as we are acquainted with this, we know dependence to be one of its attributes; when we enlarge our acquaintance with its constitution and course, we find that the same law still holds good; nor does any thing which appears respecting what we are unacquainted with, lead us to suppose, that the jurisdiction of that law is short of universal; so far from it, that all presumptions are in favor of its being so. That which we must find somewhere, and can find nowhere in the sensible universe, we cannot be mistaken in referring to a power external to the sensible universe, to which power we give the name, God. And when we have advanced thus far, we have plainly gone to the end of the inquiry. We have found a First Cause, as soon as we have found that which has no dependence on other things, and needed nothing anterior to produce it.

I would show the fallacy of the argument in another form. If, it is said, the excellence of what is called the creation can be urged to show that it must have had a creator, then it fol-

lows from the superior excellence of the creator, that he must have had one also, and so on, in a series; so that nothing is gained by the hypothesis. I reply, that the argument, which is urged for a designing Author of the creation, is not drawn from the excellence of the creation simply, but from a peculiar excellence which it exhibits, significant, as we say, of external, antecedent design; namely, the excellence of adaptation, of the adjustment to one another of things mutually independent, so as to produce a definite result; — the adjustment, for instance, of the eye to light, or of the position and material of the teeth, or the solvent virtue of the gastric juice, to the substance of things provided to sustain life, through the processes of mastication and digestion. This adaptation, we say, of different things to one another, in order to the production of an ulterior result, proves design, intention, contrivance. It proves the action of a cause, and that an intelligent cause. It testifies to an intelligence, which knew what needed to be done, and how it was to be done. Now it is impossible to retort this argument upon the theist, with a view to show, that, on his own principles, his Creator must have been created, and therefore his theory explains nothing. On the very terms of the statement, that fact, which makes the basis of the argument in the other case, has no existence in respect to the Creator. The Creator has powers; he has infinitely varied capacities; but what is the Creator adapted to? What sense would there be in speaking of the adaptations of the Creator to his works? For the very reason that they are his works, there can be no adaptation between him and them. Adaptations subsist between things, which, being mutually independent, are brought together in order to conspire to some common end. It is essential to the theory of theism, that there is nothing independent of God; from which its follows, that there is nothing, which, when brought into comparison with him, can suggest the idea of adaptation, in any such sense as that in which I have now been using the word. The sensible universe displays many and wonderful adaptations. We say, that the things manifesting them must have had a

designing author. Nothing of the kind can be predicated of the Creator, as any one conceives him. The First Cause, the independent existence, the source of all other existence, can be adapted to nothing. In respect to him, such reasoning has no place, because its element is wanting.

Such, I think, is an outline of considerations, which satisfy a reasonable man, that the sensible universe had an intelligent Creator, and that the existence of that Creator is independent and uncaused.

II. I proceed to the second great division of the subject. Having become satisfied of the existence of a Creator, we wish to acquaint ourselves, as far as may be, with his attributes, his properties, the modes of his being. And, among these, we wish especially to become acquainted with his powers and dispositions; inasmuch as it is on his capacities for action, and the principles and spirit of his action, that our interests, the interests of his creatures and subjects, depend.

Under this head, I must needs confine myself within very narrow limits, compared with the vast range to which it extends itself. I propose merely to hint at the method of proof of some of the divine attributes, and to say a few words upon the two most prominent difficulties relating to the subject.

Our knowledge of God's attributes is made up, in part, like our knowledge of his existence, of inferences from observations on the structure and movements of the sensible universe, and, in part, of conclusions from the essential notion of him as being underived and independent.

To affirm the *personality* of the Deity is to take no step beyond affirming that there is a Deity. If there is meaning in words, an intelligent agent is a *person*. No one will speak of a God, yet deny to him personality, unless, for the greater confusion's sake, he designs to adopt for himself a different language from that which is current. Deny that there is an intelligent First Cause of all things, and you throw us back upon the proof of a God. Affirm it, and yet say, that that

intelligent cause is not a person, and to others, who use words in their common acceptation, you only utter two contradictory propositions in the same breath; while, for yourself, you do but trifle, in rejecting the use of a significant term, which expresses in one form what you have just been expressing in another. Still, in so trifling, you are likely to do your own mind great harm, confusing a notion which it is your own fault if you do not keep plain, as it is plain, and laying a basis for ulterior erroneous conclusions.

God is *one*. It is customary to infer his unity from the unity of design manifest in the universe, a unity which we are able to trace to the remotest parts of the universe, of which we have any cognizance. The law of gravitation, for instance, is the same for the most distant body in motion or rest, as for the body the nearest to our eye. The laws of light are the same for the fixed stars, as for our earth. But I think it is sufficient to say, that where one First Cause is adequate to explain all phenomena, it is unphilosophical, and contrary to the rules of reasoning, to suppose another, or others. He who maintains, that there is more than one source of created being, takes upon himself the burden of proof, and of proof which he will find himself unable to provide, consisting as it would need to do, in showing that one First Cause is not competent to the production of all existing effects. This is, I say, to my view, sufficient and satisfactory; though it would be easy further to show, that the doctrine of two supreme intelligences would involve the most fatal incongruities of statement. I do not insist on the possibility of their coming into practical conflict in the government of the world, in which case there would be only this alternative, that the supremacy of one must yield, or else the supremacy of both, either of which would afford a refutation of the argument, in the way of a *reductio ad absurdum*. But some of the divine attributes are such, as to be essentially incapable of subsisting together in more than one being. This might be largely illustrated. Let the attributes of omniscience and omnipotence furnish a single example. If there were two deities, and one could prevent

the other from knowing something which he thought or did, then that other would not be omniscient. If he could not so prevent the other, then he himself would not be almighty.

God is *eternal.* As he never began, so he will never cease to be. This knowledge we obtain by reasoning upon his uncaused existence, and not, like the knowledge of that existence, by observation of his works. To say that his being originated in no external agency or influence, is to say that it is above, and independent of, any such agency or influence, and accordingly does not lean on any such for its prolongation, nor is liable to be brought by it to decay. This being so, there is no conceivable agency, except his own, by which the being of God could be terminated; and, not to enter into any metaphysical argument to the point, that that which is self-existent cannot but continue to exist, the idea of a suicidal God is such as no one has felt called upon to argue against.

God is *omniscient;* by which is meant, that he perfectly knows all knowable things. This doctrine, again, is a necessary inference from that of a universal Creator. He who made all creatures and things, — that is to say, who gave them their being and properties, — cannot but know the being and properties which himself has given, and the ways in which they will be developed and will operate. Connected, however, with the doctrine of the divine omniscience, is one of the difficulties to which I shall presently ask attention.

God is *all-wise;* wisdom being a different thing from knowledge, in having reference, which the other has not, to action. It may be certainly concluded, that he who, being omniscient, is perfectly acquainted with the properties, relations, tendencies, and uses of things, will be able to judge unerringly how they may and should be disposed.

God is *almighty;* that is, he can do all things which are essentially possible to be done. This is another easy and safe inference from the original idea of Deity as a creative power. He, who made all things, can undoubtedly alter or unmake

them, and, in short, do with them what he will. Nor is any limitation imposed to the Divine power by the suggestion, that it does not apply to impossible things. To speak of a thing being made to be and not to be, in the same time and place, is to utter a contradiction in terms; and to a statement involving a contradiction in terms every metaphysical impossibility (such as, for instance, the drawing of a triangle whose angles shall amount to more or less than two right angles) is capable of being reduced. Now that which is expressed in a self-contradictory proposition, is nothing. Accordingly, to do what such a proposition expresses, is to do nothing; and to do nothing is the appropriate office, not of infinite power, but of no power.

In speaking of the *omnipresence* of God, I suppose that, in a safe way of representing the subject, we can only be understood to affirm the omnipresence of his perceptions and power. The human *sensorium* occupies only a limited space. However difficult, or rather impossible, it may be to explain the nature and method of that occupation, there is no difficulty in imagining the space occupied to be greater, much greater, indefinitely greater; and to say that God, in every moment, perceives, and has power, throughout his universe, appears to be as safe as to say, that he would not make more than he could watch and regulate. But I think a just distrust of our powers forbids us to go further, and extend our affirmation, on any grounds which natural religion furnishes, to a constant, actual, personal presence. In so doing, we should be entering a field of speculation, which, in a similar case, where the facts are before us, our consciousness tells us that we have not the needful capacities to explore.

The difficulty consists in defining the idea of presence. Our notion of a spirit occupying space, — whether a portion of space, or the whole, — is unavoidably to the last degree vague. My limbs are not myself, but I am certainly present with them; how present, as certainly, no one can explain. I act upon another person by my touch, and no one hesitates to say that I am present with him. I act upon another with my voice, exerted at its highest pitch, and with him too I may be

said to be present, but it is certainly in a qualified sense. On yet another I act by my written words, and then the idea of personal presence is out of the question. Agency, in the strictest sense of the word, as referred alone to the person acting, no doubt implies the presence of that person (whatever presence is), at the time and place when and where he acts. But the subject acted upon is not necessarily, in the same sense, in the agent's presence; and whether or not the constant exertion of the power of God upon his universe requires his constant actual presence in every part of it, is what I suppose we are too ignorant of some important elements of the question to affirm. Nor do I perceive, that, apart from this, there is any other medium of proof on which we can rely, to show the personal omnipresence of the Deity, as distinguished from his constant universal perception and operation.

I pass over the doctrine of the divine *spirituality*, both because of the extent of remark which a satisfactory treatment of it would require, and because I conceive it to belong to the department of metaphysics rather than of natural religion. That is to say, I suppose that a person, who should imagine the intelligent principle to be incapable of existing without a material organism, might entertain the same persuasions respecting God, as the object of the religious sentiment, with another who held to what I esteem the true theory upon the subject.

The *benevolence* of the Deity has been commonly argued, and that with great force, and in the use of topics suited powerfully to interest and excite the mind, from the great preponderance of happiness over misery in that part of his creation which we can examine; from the existence of the numerous express contrivances to that end; and from the absence of all contrivances to produce the contrary result. The argument is good, because we can only reason from what we know, and must be content with such results as that will yield us. But, inasmuch as it is subject to the reply, that just as, in that part of the universe subject to our inspection, there is evil over which the good predominates, so it is possible, that the good

which is within the narrow range of our observation, may be overborne by a balance of evil in that much larger part of the creation which we are unable to bring into the comparison, — inasmuch, I say, as the cogency of the argument is subject, or may appear to be subject, to some abatement on this ground, there is satisfaction in seeing it corroborated by more abstract and comprehensive considerations.

A decisive one I take the following to be; that it is inconceivable, that a being capable of moral perceptions, capable of knowing the right and understanding its character, should do the wrong, except with a view to some safety or some gain; the converse of which is, that a being perfectly wise, so as to be incapable of being deceived as to the character of conduct, and almighty, so as to have nothing to hope or fear from others in yielding his own preferences, will infallibly, on all occasions, choose the right in conduct. He will do this for the reason, that moral rectitude, holiness, goodness, is the supreme good, the absolutely eligible thing. Through his wisdom he sees it to be so, and sees, in every individual instance, wherein the quality resides; and through his almightiness he is free from any influence restraining his choice. The consideration applies to the universal moral perfection of the Divine Being. This established, particular qualities, as benevolence, justice, veracity, necessarily follow, or rather are involved.

I proposed, under this head, to say a few words upon two principal difficulties attaching to the theory of the divine attributes. The first relates to the reconcilement of the omniscience of God with the freedom of will in inferior intelligent agents. How, it is asked, can God certainly foreknow how a man will act at some future time, unless it is absolutely unavoidable that the man should so act, — in other words, unless he will act under a necessity? Or, to arrive at the alleged incongruity in a little different method, as the foreknowledge of God cannot possibly be frustrated, how can a man, when he fulfils it, be said to be at liberty?

An answer to this inquiry, taking the representation of the case to be correct, may be stated as follows. The action of

one being does not depend upon, nor is governed by, the persuasions of another being respecting that action. On the contrary, in the order of logic, the persuasion is consequent upon the event which it contemplates, and that, equally whether the one or the other precedes in the order of time; that is, whether the persuasion, — the belief or knowledge, — respects a past event or a future. The action of another person, past or future, has not been, or will not be, of a certain kind, because I believe or know that it has been or will be of that kind. On the contrary, I believe, or I know, that it has been, or will be, such and no other, because this is the probable truth, or the truth, — probability or truth independent of my knowledge, and which would be equally what it is (whether probability or truth), if I knew, believed, or thought nothing of the matter. With my limited knowledge of facts and feeble power of reasoning, I can often make up a confident judgment how another would act under certain expected or possible circumstances. The time comes, the circumstances occur, and he acts as I predicted that he would; and this, without experiencing the slightest coercion or influence from me. I say, without the slightest; with none whatever; for this is material to the argument.

Now suppose the knowledge and sagacity, which enabled me confidently to anticipate what time presents as actual the result, to be greatly increased; the resources, and with them the strength, of my conviction respecting the future event will of course be greatly increased also, and this still without the exertion of any influence upon the decisions of the individual, whose course I am foretelling. But this knowledge and wisdom are capable of being increased in an indefinite degree; and with each increase their conclusions make a nearer approach to certainty, without making any approach whatever to compulsion; and in an infinite being they exist in an infinite degree, so that it would seem, that in him the certainty might be absolutely attained, and still without compulsion being at all involved. In few words; if the limited sagacity of a wise man may predict with confidence, from his knowl-

edge of another's character, what that other's behaviour will be in a given case, and this without putting the smallest constraint upon his action, what hinders that the perfection of the same quality in God should enable him to predict the same thing with absolute certainty, without any force exercised on a man's free choice?

But, again, the assertion out of which the supposed difficulty arises is, that the divine mind knows, with strict and absolute certainty, the decisions which in future time inferior intelligences, in the use of their free will, may make. And it is possible, that, in thus asserting, we proceed to an indefensible corollary from the doctrine of God's omniscience. His omniscience no more implies that he can know things not possible to be known, than his almightiness implies that he can do things not possible to be done. Both capacities, when put into language, fall alike under the category of contradictions in terms; — that is, they are no capacities. There is, then, a preliminary question occurring here. That which is, strictly speaking, contingent, is it, strictly speaking, knowable? That which is not a certain event, — that is, in the present case, the future decision of a free mind, — is it a subject of certain knowledge? Because, if not, then to say that God does not certainly know it, is no more to take away from the infinite vastness of his capacities, than to say that he does not see a sound, or imagine an axiom. The faculty exists in perfection; but the case in question does not present its object. Nor could it be replied to such a view, that to suppose it correct would be to suppose more left to the unascertained discretion of inferior agents, than would be for the safety of God's universe. For, in the first place, we are only making a dialectical distinction. Actually, the foreknowledge of God, immense as are its resources, would prove to be justified by the event on the one theory as well as on the other. And, in the second place, if we will insist on the metaphysical possibility of some unanticipated event, there would still be the infinite resources of the divine power and wisdom, to meet the exigency whenever it so befell.

The other chief difficulty, belonging to the theory of the divine attributes, relates to the reconcilement of the divine benevolence, the proper office of which is to produce good, with the unquestionable existence of what we call evil; of physical evil, which is pain, and of moral evil, which is wickedness.

Nothing is done towards the solution of this problem by the representation so commonly urged, that good greatly preponderates over evil; for the question still remains, Why any evil whatever? If it belonged to the divine goodness to take care that good should prevail, why not that it should prevail unopposed, unqualified, undisturbed? Nothing, I say, is thus done towards a solution of the problem. That is, nothing directly. Indirectly something is done. The preponderance of good over evil indicates to us the prevailing design of the one Disposer, and so creates a presumption, that, if we had the whole case before our minds, which from our ignorance we have not, we should see that design to be not only prevailing but uniform.

Nor may it be averred, that the difficulty is disposed of by simply saying, that moral evil is the abuse, and physical evil often results from the abuse, of the free agency of created intelligences. For the question would recur, Why, — since their free action is not omnipotence, but on the contrary, very many other things are excluded from its range, — why was evil of both kinds not among the things thus excluded.

There are two chief considerations which go to the explanation of this difficulty. In the first place, many things called evils are simply imperfections. Let me choose a different phraseology, which will perhaps bring out their character more fully. They are evils, in respect to a comparison of them with other things which are better. They take their character of evil simply from the point of view in which we choose to look at them. It is evil to me that I cannot do, or possess, or enjoy, all that some other being can. I complain, for instance, of my physical weakness as an evil. What do I then mean? I mean, that I am not as strong as Atlas, or as many others, or as most others, or as I was

myself at some other time. I do not mean that I have not some strength; I have; and strength is the opposite of weakness, and a good. My complaint then is, that I have no more of a good, of which I have some. And this I have no right to complain of, torturing my sense of deficiency into a sense of evil, unless I am prepared to complain, that all excellences and felicities do not meet in me, that is, that I am not a perfect being. Every created being is imperfect; if mere imperfection in any form be an evil and a ground of complaint, then it is reasonable to complain that God gave us life; but, on the contrary, every one allows that existence is a good. All things called evils, — more or fewer, lighter or more grievous, — which can be shown to be so only in this way, must be put out of the present account; for it is no impeachment of the divine benevolence, that finite being is not infinite, that man is not God.

Further, different degrees and kinds of imperfection are incident to the variety in God's creation. And that variety is a great good. It better illustrates the divine greatness, than a more uniform and limited display of creative energy would have done. It quickens inquiry, and feeds thought, in man and other finite intelligences. It is the foundation of endless mutual dependencies and relations, and so of as many diversities of sentiment and action on the part of sentient beings.

The other chief consideration is, that what we call evils are probably in all cases the necessary accompaniments or means of greater good. But here a twofold task is presented to the inquirer. He must ascertain, in the first place, that evils in fact are, in some cases, incidents or means of good, and this to that extent, that a probability arises that they are so in other cases, less subject to our examination; and, in the second place, he must satisfy himself how it could be, or rather that it reasonably might be, that an almighty being could not produce all the good, without any evil for its accompaniment or instrument.

As to the first point, the proposition is clearly true, in that case in which we are best able to trace it; that is, in our own

experience. As things are constituted, evil is in fact, on a large scale, the occasion of good. Physical evil leads to physical good. My painful toil makes provision for my appetite; or it feeds others; or their toil feeds me. Physical evil is the basis of moral good. It is good for me to know the sentiment of gratitude; that I may, I am placed in some respects in a condition of want and dependence. That I should feel the emotion of pity, and know the pleasure of usefulness, is a great good to me; to excite the feeling and afford opportunity for the service, I see near me needy and suffering persons. Even moral evil provides a basis for moral good. There are no higher social virtues than compassion for the guilty, and forgiveness of the injurious. Where would be such compassion and forgiveness, if there were no obliquity, and no offence?

But it is quite needless to multiply such illustrations. Certain it is, that our moral education, — which, apart from the connexion that Christianity represents it to have with the condition of a future life, must be regarded by every reflecting man as the most worthy end of living, — certain it is, that, as things actually are, that education is in great part conducted through the instrumentality of evil. This being so, the eminent excellence of the end converts the painful means into a good. I cannot ask to be spared the conflict with suffering. I want that conflict. I want the satisfaction of knowing the strength of my nature. How am I to know it, till I have put it forth and used it; and how am I to use it, with nothing to use it upon? I want to strengthen that strength, and train it to its highest point of efficiency. As things are, how am I to do this, except by exercising it in efforts and struggles? But the occasion of effort and struggle is inconvenience, difficulty, opposition, the existence of something unsatisfactory and adverse.

The real perplexity in this part of the subject relates to the sufferings, not of rational, but of brute nature. I do not think it material to urge, that these are greatly exaggerated in our imagination, through our adoption of a standard of judgment

which belongs to our own nature, and not to that of lower animals; though such is undoubtedly the fact. The statement, that

> "the poor beetle which we tread upon,
> In corporal sufferance, feels a pang as great
> As when a giant dies,"

is good poetry, but very bad physiology. The truth is, that Providence, by a beautiful arrangement, seems not to have allowed sensibility, in any case, to be keen to a degree beyond its uses. The arrangement of the nervous system in insects (that peculiarly exposed class), so different from that in the human frame, in respect to the absence of the brain and spinal cord, is such as to forbid all comparison of the sensibility of the two. A crane-fly will lose half its legs, and fly about with apparent unconcern. The tail of a wasp or bee will sting, and the head of a dragon-fly will eat voraciously, after it is severed from the body. The tortoise walks in the same condition; and Mr. Kirby saw a cock-chafer move about with no appearance of uneasiness, after some bird had nearly emptied its body of the *viscera*. Also, to lower animals are unknown the pains of memory and apprehension, which grievously exasperate to us, what, condensed into a point of time, would be light to bear. But, however the supposed amount of their sufferings may be reduced in a just estimate, still what remains, remains to be accounted for as a thing consistent with the goodness of him who appointed it.

It is partly accounted for by considerations of the same class with those which relate to the same problem in the case of man. They, like ourselves, are warned of danger by pain. For them, as for us, toil brings acquisition, and fatigue sweetens rest. So the fact, that by turns they prey and are preyed upon, amounts to this, — that now they suffer for others' good, and now others suffer for theirs. To which it has been well added, first, that, immortality being out of the question, a violent death is better than natural decay (which is the only alternative), for animals without forethought to make pro-

vision against a period of infirmity, and without social relations, assuring to them the attentions of others; and, secondly, that the principle of *superfecundity*, a provision attended with great advantages, requires the antagonist principle of destruction to keep it in proper check.

A portion, I have said, of the evil attendant upon their lot can be accounted for, on the basis of its being the step towards an ulterior and greater good. A portion remains, corresponding to what in man is explained by the consideration of its being the instrument of his probation and moral progress. Not being authorized to apply this consideration to the case of brutes, we are fain to say, that when, in that sphere where we are most competent to the examination, we are able to trace goodness so far as we do, (and that often with its most striking signatures, where the first aspect has been the most inauspicious,) it is right that we should infer it further than we are able to trace it. And certainly, when we remember that the explanation, above all others satisfactory, which we are able to give of human sufferings, is founded on our knowledge of the object of human life, it cannot surprise us that we are not able to point out all the purpose of brute sufferings, till we know, far better than we now know, the use which brute existence was intended to serve in the system of things. I do not pretend to be hinting at any thing probable, but certainly it is not any thing manifestly incredible, when I suggest that the infant human soul, when it starts upon its human probation, may be not a new creation, but a result; that the powers and tendencies, brought then to the work and discipline of a man, may be the fruit of previous training in other forms. It may possibly be, that I became acquainted with the elementary action of consciousness when I was a zoöphyte, the thing placed at the shortest remove above vegetable life; that I had some of my earliest practice in sensation, when I was an oyster, or some animal more inefficient; that I learned motion when I was a snail; that I was taught to love order and subordination in a bee-hive, and so passed on through various processes of preparation for my higher human

experience. It is perhaps no more incredible that from lower animals we have become men, than, — what is the subject of very general belief, — that from men we may become angels. I repeat, that I do not urge the likelihood of any thing of this kind; but only that, baffled as we are by the whole mystery of the life of inferior animals, we are not justified in denying, that they may be under some training for some end, and that accordingly their sufferings are capable of being vindicated on principles having some analogy to those employed in the case of man. At all events it is safe to say, that, in our profound ignorance respecting the object, we are little prepared to affirm any unfitness in the means.*

These remarks have borne upon the fact of the connexion of evil with greater good as its concomitant or cause; a connexion, which in no case of the existence of the former can be disproved; which in many cases is clear; and which is so clear in so many, where the presumption, on a hasty view, or antecedent to experience, would be the other way, as to create a strong probability that it would appear equally in other

* I am not strenuous about the propriety of the application of the term *training* to the case of brutes, used in the course of remark above, though I have carefully employed it instead of *discipline*, which I understand still more distinctly to imply some method of influence operating through reflections, and consequent determinations, of the party disciplined. Allowing it to be a somewhat violent use of the term, to make it denote the influence under which any habit is formed, however unintelligent the subject of the process, — still, for want of one more appropriate, I may be permitted here to adopt it in this broad sense. It can scarcely be necessary to say, that the notion of men's advancing to be angels is not adduced as presenting a strict analogy with the other progress which I have imagined. The analogy fails in the important particular of consciousness being retained in the one case, and not in the other. But, were I to proceed to argue (against Locke's doctrine), that consciousness is not personal identity, but only evidence of it, — an evidence which it is supposable might be wanting where the identity existed, so that identity, with which habits would pass, might be continued with an interruption of consciousness, — I might risk being misapprehended, as if (instead of merely suggesting a specimen of possibilities) I were proposing a theory; a purpose which I have sufficiently disclaimed.

cases, were we, in those others, equally qualified for the investigation. I pass to the second point, that of the actual connexion being also a needful one. The actual connexion, it will be said, between evil and preponderating good, may be granted; but why should not God, being unlimited in power and benevolence, have given us the one unmingled with the other?

The question, if I view it rightly, owes its apparent perplexity to a mere artifice of words. In its simplest forms it is equivalent to this; Why could not God at the same time have done a thing, and not have done it? And, in forms more complicated, it is still susceptible of the same analysis. I am persuaded, that the true answer to it is one which should expose the fallacious uses, of which that human instrument, language, is capable, and show how it is actually used to represent that as a metaphysical possibility, which is only an inconsistency and contradiction; in other words, to represent that as something, which really is nothing, and which therefore it belongs to no divine attribute to do. No significant question can be raised upon the actual omission of that, the effecting of which is no subject for the operation of power. Does any one make such an inquiry, as whether God can be almighty, when he cannot make a square circle, or cause a rose to be at the same time a logarithm? I think it enough to answer, that the name *rose* stands for one thing, and the name *logarithm* for another. The nominal difference was devised to correspond to the real. Men assigned different names, because they had first seen what the names represented, to be actually and essentially different things; and, after contriving a language founded in the perception of such differences, then to turn round and employ that language in asking why things, being different, may not be the same, is to put their invention to a very unprofitable use.

In a word, then, upon this basis we are authorized to say, that physical evil is, in some instances, (and if actually in some instances, then it may be in all, — the *à priori* argument for the negative is barred in all cases, as soon as we have

detected its falsity in some,) physical evil is the necessary instrument of moral good, the greatest good of man. It is as impossible as any other contradiction, that I should be courageous, which is a good, independently of danger, which is an evil; because courage, of its nature, has reference to danger; without the perception of danger it has no being. What is patience? It is that quality of the mind, which rises superior to painful circumstances. It is as impossible as any thing which can be put into words, that, where painful circumstances are not, there patience shall be. Self-collected, self-relying virtue, in all forms, is virtue which can trust itself. And how can it trust itself, unless it can remember that it has been tried, and been true; and how are you going to give me the memory of trial, till you have allowed me the trial itself? A maturely good man is a man ripened in goodness; and all we know of the human mind assures us, that, being the nature that it is, it can no more be ripened without various discipline, than a fruit can be ripened without sunshine and rain. *Being the nature that it is.* You may say, that it might have been a different nature from what it is. But then we part with our elements for an argument, and also come back upon the ground of variety in nature, and consequent imperfection of its parts.

Physical evil, I have urged, for a being in the stage of improvement at which we find man, is the necessary instrument of moral good. Moral evil, I add, — or, to speak more precisely, the probability of moral evil, which for the purposes of this argument is the same, — is the necessary incident of moral good. If virtue consists in using rightly a freedom of choice between a right and a wrong course of action, then liability to sin is an absolutely necessary condition of the existence of virtue. When it should become impossible for men to be wicked, then of course their virtue would be compulsory; and, being compulsory, it would be no longer virtue. If the capacity of making a choice between right and wrong be, by its very statement, a liberty susceptible of abuse, and if

enforced virtue be a mere senseless collocation of words, there is an end of the present question.

III. In laying out our subject, we said that Natural Religion, besides treating of the divine being and attributes, comprises the doctrine of *the relations sustained by man to God*, and of *the duty of man*. I have occupied so much time with the first two branches of the argument, that I shall be expected to study the utmost conciseness in my further observations.

Upon the ground of our preceding considerations, the relation of man to God is that of a creature, subject, and dependent, to a Creator, Sovereign, and bountiful Friend. As such, it is evident he is bound to do God's will, and has reason to do it cheerfully. I say, "to do God's will." I am not denying that moral rectitude has an inherent obligation, independent of the ordinance of any being. But that is not the subject which we are now treating, but religious obligation, of which a reference to God's will is the essential element. What is his will, as ascertained independently of revelation? What instruction does Natural Religion offer us respecting obedience or virtue? Of course, I attempt no answer to this question, which descends into details. These belong to the science of deontology. I do not undertake the composition of an ethical treatise; and there is no medium between this, and a mere brief statement of the principles of the subject.

We cannot dispose of our present question by an appeal to conscience. Conscience, as it exists native in the mind, is a principle extensively intelligent, no doubt, but still of imperfect intelligence compared with the extent of duty. Often it is doubtful, and applies to reason, — as well as to revelation, where that is enjoyed, — to have its doubts resolved. It also makes its own express demand, that its intimations shall be confirmed, as far as may be, by intellectual perceptions of moral truth. To say that it may be perplexed, that it requires to be enlightened, and that reason, — reason applied to the

principles of religion, — is its instructor, is no more than to say, that there is place for such a science as casuistry.

The most simple and satisfactory view of the principles of Natural Religion, involved in the question of man's duty, I take to be as follows; that every being will delight in what promotes his purposes, and every good being in what resembles himself; and that every creator of any thing which can act, will intend that it shall act suitably to its constitution and place. Because God delights in what promotes his purposes, he will have man practise the virtues of a self-denying character, these virtues having a tendency to make him efficient and happy, as God designed him to be. For the same reason, as well as that he delights in resemblance to himself, he will have man practise virtues of the class of justice and benevolence. Because he will have his creature act suitably to its place, he demands from man such dispositions and observances as gratitude, humility, and worship, of which, from his own different nature, he is himself incapable.

With these principles for guides, conclusions respecting the demands of virtue, for the most part (though not altogether) correct and satisfactory, may be and have been reached, independently of revelation. Upon this subject the views of cultivated and reflecting men have, in all ages, corresponded to a great extent with each other. The exceptions, however, to this remark, though not many, I need not say, are of extreme importance. The obligation of humility, that of meekness under affronts and injuries, and of philanthropy, as distinguished from more restricted forms of friendship, — that is, of the charity which extends itself to man as man, and therefore to the criminal, the injurious, and the distant, — these, it is not using too strong language to say, were discoveries of the religion of Jesus Christ. Again, while experience of what contributes to personal dignity and well-being, and to the welfare of the social state, afforded substantially a correct guidance in respect to the personal and social virtues, the comprehension of that department of virtue, of which God is the immediate object, has always been just

so far embarrassed as the character of the Divine Being was imperfectly understood.

But, the will of God being more or less known, did Natural Religion furnish any thing additional to the abstract sense of obligation, to prompt men to its fulfilment? Or, — to arrive at the same point by another path, — beside the present relation of man to God, did it teach that there was any other and more permanent, which had a right to be brought into consideration, when the question of a course of conduct was entertained, and which will quicken us by showing that right conduct is our great interest as well as our duty? Does Natural Religion establish the truth of the doctrine of human immortality, or even that of another life after death?

I cannot but profess my dissatisfaction with the arguments, which have been used to prove that it gives instruction in either the more or the less comprehensive of these doctrines. I cannot find that either can be safely argued from any of the attributes of the Divine Being. Not from his benevolence. When he has given us so much, we have no right to say, that he will give us more; his benevolence, too, embraces the brute creation, but we do not therefore suppose that he has appointed for them another life beyond the present. Not from his justice, which it has been thought is a pledge to us, that, since retribution is imperfect in the present life, there must be another, in which the adjustment of condition to desert will be complete. His justice cannot be shown to require any thing more, than that no being shall suffer a wrong at his hands, or, — to include also the case of ill desert, — any thing more, than that, taking the whole of life together, be that life longer or shorter, a man shall be the happier for being virtuous, and the less happy for being wicked; and let any one who believes in the essential felicity of virtue, — who recognises virtue for the supreme good, — answer, whether it would not, at least, be very hard to prove, that the most persecuted and afflicted man is not even in this world the happier for his goodness, and the most successful man (so called) the less happy for his want of it. At all events, to allow to this argu-

ment all that it claims, it would only go to prove, that there will be a future life long enough to make compensation for an existing inequality in the dispensations of this. It would still fall infinitely short of showing, that that future life will be unending. Nor only so; it would go to sustain the opposite inference, since there is no proportion between the most eminent human virtue, and an immortal blessedness for its reward.

Nor can I allow force to the argument from the immaterial nature of the human soul, exempting it from that dissolution which affects the body. Supposing that doctrine to be true (which I believe), still it remains to be said, that the mere freedom from essential tendency to decay gives the soul no security for continued existence, since he who made that immaterial essence is doubtless able to annihilate it; and the only pertinent question is, whether he will do so; a question which other considerations must determine, if it be determinable. I agree to what has been said, — and much has been very powerfully said, particularly of late, — respecting the soul's independence of the body. But it all amounts only to the negative argument, that there is no proof of a death of the soul, simultaneous with the body's death. It goes no further than to show, that the question is an open question, whether the two events occur together. And whether the soul is to die, if not when the body dies, at some other time, is an inquiry which it does not touch at all.

The "fond desire of immortality", allowing it to be universal, affords no satisfactory assurance on the subject. The Ciceronian, or the Platonic question, why we "startle at destruction" if we are to be destroyed, might be asked respecting the brutes as well. Our instinct of love of life is the same as theirs. That we, unlike them, dread the extinction of life in future time, as well as at the present, is only an incident of our better faculty of forethought.

Nor is the capacity of endless improvement, which we think we discern in every man, a pledge that every man will be permitted to pursue that improvement in an endless life.

At most it would only show, that, since the provision must be understood to contemplate some result, the supposed end will, in some single cases, be attained. When we propose to press it to the extent of proving the immortality of each and every man, we find it invalidated, as the foundation of such an inference, by numberless analogies in nature. The human infant is formed capable of reaching the mature human stature; but one half of the race die within the first five years. The oak is capable of living more than half a millennium; but probably, of many thousands born of acorns, not one actually attains to that age. Each embryo in the spawn of a cod-fish has a capacity of growing to the size of the parent animal; but, of the score or two of millions computed to be produced by it in one season, how very few is it likely ever reach that size.

In confirmation of what has been said of the incapacity of human reason to find its way to a conviction of the doctrine of immortality, I might appeal to the fact, so familiar to my audience, of the unsatisfied state of mind of the ancient sages on this subject. Certainly I do not mean to take the general ground, that what those great intellects failed to discover was essentially undiscoverable, or that Natural Religion contains no more than they saw it to contain. But we cannot account for their ignorance of this doctrine, as we may for their ignorance of some others, in consistency with the supposition of its having been actually within their reach. It was not one of those which they passed over; on the contrary, they pondered it with a solemn and intense curiosity; and the processes, by which they endeavoured to arrive at some persuasion of its truth, were substantially the same that have been employed in more recent times.*

Of course, if Natural Religion cannot prove so much as a future life, it can prove nothing respecting the retribution of a

* Cicero actually presents three of our modern arguments, mentioned above, in the first book of his Tusculan Questions; and Plutarch has what strongly resembles the fourth in his treatise on the Delay of Retribution (Opera, edit. Xyl. p. 560).

future life; a doctrine, which, to those who possess it, supplies the chief sanction of duty.

IV. I proceed, in the prescribed order of the discussion, to say a few words respecting *the proper use and improvement of the principles of Natural Religion.*

For such as are not addressed by Revealed Religion, the proper use and improvement of the principles of Natural Religion of course consists in the satisfaction to be derived from them, such as they can be ascertained to be, and the personal application of them to the conduct of life. For those whom Revealed Religion has not reached, Natural Religion is the rule of life; the rule for them to act, and the rule for them to be judged by. So the reason of the case attests; and so the Christian apostle understood, when he said, that the Gentiles, "having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing, one another."

In the faith of those who have been addressed by, and who have received, Revealed Religion, the system of Natural Religion still holds a large place of independent authority. The Christian believer does not owe to Christianity his knowledge of the being of God, or of the divine benevolence in its general outline, because, as is sufficiently manifest, these must first be known, before the peculiar evidence presented for Christianity can be allowed to be valid. Christianity, when its authority is proved, does very much towards making these doctrines distinct and practical in my mind, but they must be in my possession before there can be reasonable grounds for my becoming a Christian; and, when I have become so, they still remain with me, as possessions derived from another origin. No intelligent Christian can speak lightly of Natural Religion. When he feels that the idea of God is an essential one, — is the fundamental one, — in his system of faith, let him remember, that it is to that source specifically that he is indebted for it.

One great use of Natural Religion, though the remark at first view strikes one as a paradox, is furnished by its own insufficiency. I have hinted, that it prepares the way for the reception of Revealed Religion. This it does in part by showing, that, of what is greatly desirable to be known in respect to the principles of God's government, the relations in which men stand to him, and the duties thence resulting, there is much that it has received no commission to teach. If, for instance, it can give no satisfactory assurance of the immortality of the soul, or if it cannot answer such a question, as whether God, consistently with his justice, can pardon sins that have been repented of (and that it cannot answer this question is plain from the fact, that, under Christianity, while his readiness to pardon sins is agreed to be a revelation of that faith, it is still disputed between different classes of believers, whether this can be, without an equivalent being rendered to his justice); if it has to own its incompetency to such disclosures, then it declares, that, after having discharged all its office, there remains an office for divine benevolence to do for man through other instrumentality; in other words, that there is reason to hope, that the deficiency will be supplied by direct revelation.

Thus, so far from pretending to supersede Revealed Religion, Natural Religion volunteers its declaration of the necessity of the other to supply its defects. It bears its humble testimony, that man, being what it represents him to be in his relations to God, is in want of, and would be benefited by, what it has not to give him. To this effect reasoned, and so hoped Plato, when, revolving these themes, he said, "We ought to take the best and firmest human reason, and, borne on this, as one venturing on a raft, sail through life, unless one might pass over more easily and safely upon some stronger vehicle, or divine word."* Of the five principles asserted by Lord Herbert of Cherbury to be alone essential in religion, and to be all comprised in Natural Religion, making

* *Phædo*, § 78.

revelation needless, two are, the forgiveness of sins repented of, and the ordinance of retribution beyond the grave. Whoever, believing in a God, cannot find these among the sufficiently clear instructions of Natural Religion, for him it remains to own, that a revelation is to be wished and hoped for. And the same is a concise answer, though it might be extended much further, to the doctrine (still from time to time virtually revived) of that once famous book, "Christianity as old as the Creation."

Natural Religion thus discloses to us a want, which at the same time it informs us that it cannot supply. It goes further, and tells us, that in him, to whom its instructions relate, there are power and disposition to supply it. Its doctrine of his omnipotence declares that he can supply it. Its doctrine of his benevolence creates a presumption that he will. Its doctrine of his veracity is our pledge, that, when he declares that he is supplying it, his revelation cannot be intended to deceive. Nature reveals to its attentive interpreter a power above it and caring for it; able (sufficient cause being presented) to interrupt, as it has established, its order, and so to authenticate the message, which by selected lips it utters in the ear of man.

It is a marvellous delusion into which they fall, as well as a most calamitous loss which they sustain, who, in their imagined high estimation of Natural Religion, put out of view that great discovery of Natural Religion, that there is One in the universe whose almightiness enables him, and whose infinitely tender benevolence may engage him, to do more for his creatures than he has done before, and to do it, as the necessity of the case requires, by extraordinary means. I say, "the necessity of the case"; for, whatever human reason is incompetent to discover, it is plain that only an extraneous communication can put it in possession of, and such extraneous communication is an extraordinary means. There are those who attribute a force to what they call *laws of nature*, to hinder that occasional extraordinary exercise of God's omnipotence in this part of his universe, which the theory of reve-

lation affirms. But the idea of a Deity restrained by any such laws, is one which Natural Religion does not tolerate. It is its glory to present us with a being, who is above all law, but that of equitable and benevolent intention; and who accordingly will break in upon his accustomed course of operation, whensoever and howsoever the paramount benevolent purpose, which caused him originally to establish that course, shall demand. What we call *laws of nature* are but our own generalizations of the remarks which we make upon the ordinary methods of divine operation. Those methods are for the most part uniform; because it is for man's benefit that they should be so, and thus afford a basis for contrivance and calculation. Whenever it is more for man's benefit that they should cease to be so, whenever such an exigency occurs, as that by their interruption men would be better served, then that self-same divine purpose, which was the principle of their institution, becomes the pledge and principle of their infringement. That is, whenever it becomes fit that God should speak directly to men, miracles being the only apparent method of ratifying the claim of him who pretends to bear the message, miracles become under such circumstances the most credible events. So distinctly pronounces Natural Religion; and so its considerate disciple is prepared to lend a favorable ear to what, the due conditions being met, professes to come to him with the authority of Revelation.

In this connexion it is commonly added, that the doctrine of the divine unity also cannot be a subject for miraculous disclosure, but that our conviction of that doctrine must precede our reception of such a message, inasmuch as otherwise we might doubt, whether what the messenger of one deity revealed might not be contradicted by the messenger of another; a remark, however, to which I cannot entirely assent. If I were doubtful whether the Divinity resided in one person or in many, yet, if I had become persuaded that it was essentially good and true, — in other words, that, whether there were more or fewer divinities, this character belonged to them all, — here would be enough to command my assent to the

truth of a miraculously attested revelation. Before I had satisfied myself whether a supernaturally endowed messenger must be received as coming from one sole in authority, or from one of many, provided I was satisfied that veracity was an attribute of the one or the many, that would suffice to convince me of his credibility; and, if he then proceeded to tell me of the unity of the Godhead, I should reasonably take that doctrine upon his word.

Another use of Natural Religion is, to do away difficulties in the theory of Revealed. In some cases, we might be inclined to say, that such and such a principle or provision of Revealed Religion was liable to objection, as not apparently compatible with the divine attributes, and was accordingly an impeachment of the credibility of the whole system. To the believer in Natural Religion this presumption is perfectly rebutted, if it can be shown to him that the difficulty, such as it may be, attaches equally to his own system. He cannot say, the God of Nature, whom I acknowledge, never gave a revelation in the alleged manner, or never announced in it an alleged doctrine, because it would offer a contradiction to his principles of operation, — provided it can be shown to him that that same principle is involved in the visible and unquestionable course of natural things. My hearers are acquainted with the masterly handling of this argument in Bishop Butler's "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature," a treatise of that admirable logic, that, apart from the magnificent character of its results, no one ever read it with attention, but felt his faculties disentangled, and all his mind grow in the perusal.

Once more; Natural Religion has an important use in giving illustration, and so clearness, and fixedness, and impelling power, to truths which it would not have discovered. I do not select an instance to explain my meaning, but take the first which occurs to my mind. The Gospel declares, that humility is a duty; not humility before God, — that Natural Religion would teach us, — but humility before man, which Natural Religion might not teach, and at any rate did not to

those of old, who listened most heedfully for its monitions. This annunciation of the Gospel turns our attention to the subject. Whatever God has commanded man to do or to be, we are sure there must be reasons for, in the relations of man, though those reasons may not hitherto have been observed. If we can discover a foundation for the humility in question in any relations of man, then it becomes to us a duty of Natural Religion, inasmuch as the system of Natural Religion, as far as it relates to duty, is founded on the relations which man sustains. Under the prompting of Revealed Religion, we search for such a reason; and in the course of the inquiry we find, that the temper of mind expelled by humility, is eminently anti-social, and opposed to the individual's dignity, self-possession, efficiency, and happiness. Pride leads us to affront others, and provokes, and makes us sensible to, their affronts; and to us and to them, as long as they and we are proud, insult is offence of a much more galling kind than injury, and harder to bear, except when the latter takes some very gross form. This being so, and the relation of man to God requiring, on the principles of Natural Religion, that man should serve God's purposes, — and one of his purposes being that man should be happy (in other words, that the individual should be happy, and strive to make others so), — humility, which Revealed Religion first presented to our notice, is seen to be a duty of Natural Religion also. The exhibition of such illustrations of Christian duty from the pulpit is apt to be stigmatized as *moral preaching;* but I suppose, that he who exhibits them intelligently is doing good service at the Christian altar.

Here I close this unworthy discussion of a most solemn, vast, and quickening theme. If it be a glory and privilege for intelligent natures to trace up any short course of what comes before the view, from consequence to spring, above all is the endeavour an appropriate, a happy, and a profitable one, to ascend from apparent things to the contemplation of a great, unseen First Cause of all. Enviable he, whose heart, in such

investigations, keeps up with the firmly-planted steps of his reason! Far truer is it to his strengthened spirit's experience, than the elegant poet knew, that

> "Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
> Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
> Subjecit pedibus."

Forbearing and avoiding all appeals to feeling, I have endeavoured to treat this high argument with a severe calmness, just as if the truth here were not infinitely precious; just as if, were it not truth, existence would not be made a fathomless, an appalling, yes, a maddening mystery; just as if we, who speak and hear, had not a far deeper stake in it than in any thing else which could be named; as if our interest in it were not immeasurably greater than in wealth, or health, or fame, or friends, or any or all things present and seen. But our omission to exhibit it as such majestic and vital truth, will not make it to be any thing less; nor will he, who sees it to be truth, entertain the question, whether it is truth of even such pretensions; nor can he, who has come to discern that such is its sovereignty, doubt whether it may command, always, the reverent homage of his life, and, as occasion shall permit, the poor service of his best championship.

Such homage, young friends, it claims, such specific service it may claim, from you. If it is very old truth, how, for that, is it the less deserving? Youth loves novelty, no doubt; but enlightened youth can see reasons, and constant youth can stand by them. Of this priceless wealth of the soul, be it your purpose, "that no man spoil you by any vain philosophy." "See that ye be no more children," well said the Apostle, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." The wind of doctrine may be as impalpable as the moving atmosphere, but it is capable of more awful ravages, and of more voluptuously stupefying power over the bewildered sense. Now, the wind of atheistic doctrine has

revealed itself a tornado force, marking its track by the wrecks of order, learning, law, and all venerable things, — by the heaped-up fragments of whatever the beneficent toil of ages has reared to fence civilization and humanity against the inroads of the bestial element in man's highly endowed, but heterogeneous nature; and now, the light effluence of some mystic's vagrant meditation, fanning the passive sense, like an air of

> "the sweet south,
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odor,"

it has but whispered its dainty melodies in some flowery corner, and sighed itself to rest in a sunshiny day. Open not your bosoms to it, young friends, any more when it comes with softness and insinuation, than when with uproar and manifest ruin. Believe that if, by accident, it may be ornate and sentimental, it is not the less in essence mean and doltish, barren at best to the mind, as well as a fatal cheat to the soul. No trial worth the name, for the truth we speak of, or for your loyalty to it, may come in your day. But the wisdom of a wise and true man is, to know and feel how he will deport himself, if the trial should come. Be the part of a prompt and stainless allegiance yours, if you would not foully shame your rearing. Stand you erect when the tempest rages, and keep spiritually awake while the perfume-laden breeze passes by. "Be not children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine." "Be not children in understanding," whom confident or winning words may impose upon; "howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."

END OF VOLUME I.

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